THE WIDOW'S BROOM

Screenplay

By

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based on his book

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EXT. DAY - MOUNTAIN LANDSCAPE

The CREDITS roll as we follow a large RAVEN riding the afternoon thermals. Scraggly pines give way to barren rocks that hold snow within their crevices.

The bird alights on a rocky ridge, beside a dozen other ravens. We hear VOICES SHOUTING, like boxing fans at ringside, punctuated by the sharp crack of wood hitting wood.

Moving past the ravens, we see BLACK ROBED WITCHES gathered in a circle on the terraced area below, surrounded by small dwellings carved out of rock, watching TWO BROOMS fight.

Larger than ordinary brooms, with long thick shafts and knee high bristles, the Brooms thrust and parry, striking each other with their shafts, shuffling and hopping on their bristles, vying to grab a SWORD that is stuck in the ground.

Cutting back and forth from the Witches' faces to the fight, PHILOMENA and PINGREL, side by side, show the keenest interest in the combat.

Philomena's Broom, gaining the advantage, wraps its prehensile shaft around the sword's handle, lifting it high in the air. The Broom spins and brings the blade down, missing the shaft of the other Broom, but slicing its bristles and the braiding that holds them to the shaft.

The injured Broom "looks" down as the noisy crowd falls silent. Its bristles drop away. The naked shaft is momentarily suspended a couple feet off the ground. Then it drops down and, balanced for a moment, receives the coup de grace as Philomena's Broom slices it in two pieces that drop to the ground with a lifeless "clunk" as the witches cheer.

As the crowd disperses, we see Pingril, now dejected, and Philomena, jubilantly cackling. Prodding the pieces of the dismembered shaft with her pointed black boot, she mocks the dejected Pingril.

PHILOMENA
Oh dear, Pingrel. And on All Hallows Eve.

Her Broom plants the sword in the ground, follows Philomena and a group of her cronies as they depart. Pingrel, with her companion ETTA, stands over the pieces of her Broom. She stomps on them, enraged.

PINGREL
Good for nothing...wretched...

ETTA
I guess you won't be riding tonight.

PINGREL
I've got another!

She picks up the pieces of broom and marches off.

ETTA
(calling after Pingrel)
That thing? You can't be serious.

EXT. A TERRACED GARDEN

On a tilted plot of land that clings precariously to the side of the mountain, a small garden grows. It abuts one of the stone dwellings carved into the mountainside. A BROOM toils there, pulling a giant two foot Zucchini from the vine. He tosses it up and balances it on the tip of his shaft, then arches his shaft. The zucchini rolls down. He gives it a flip, and it lands in a two wheeled barrow, filled with other giant zucchini. He repeats the process, but when this zucchini lands, its force and weight levels the tilted barrow, lifting the handles that held it in place.

It begins to roll away, towards the edge of the garden and a 100 foot drop. The Broom grabs onto the handle and stiffens his bristles into the soil, but cannot hold back the overloaded barrow. He is dragged to the edge, then lets go as the barrow crashes through a rickety fence and falls away.

The Broom stands and timidly "looks" over the edge.

PINGREL
What's going on!?

The Broom turns. Pingrel approaches and spies the broken barrow below.

PINGREL (cont'd)
You idiot.

She draws her arm back to club the Broom with the remains of her "fighting broom". The Broom leans back. Pingrel laughs and tosses the remains on the ground.

PINGREL (cont'd)
Guess what?

The Broom inspects the pieces, straightens up and hops back.

Pingrel steps toward the Broom backing it up to the cliff at the garden's edge. He jerks his shaft left and right as she reaches out. He bolts around her, but gets tangled up in the rope-like zucchini vines. He falls. Pingrel approaches and places her pointy boot across the shaft.

EXT. PINNACLE OF MOUNTAIN AERIE - DUSK

A line of witches moves up a windblown stone stairway. Some carry torches, all carry brooms. They are gathering on a cliff that looks out onto a thousand foot drop.

At the cliff's edge, Philomena climbs steps cut into a boulder. Her black robes flutter as she poses before a dramatic sky that catches the last bit of daylight. She yells out in manic glee:

PHILOMENA
Sisters, are we ready?

WITCHES
YES!

Holding her broom in one hand, Philomena leaps off the boulder into free fall, gracefully mounts it, and accelerates skyward. One by one the other witches heave themselves into the sky, until only Etta remains. She waits, looking back at the stone stairway.

Pingrel appears, holding the Broom, which twists in her arms, its bristled end flapping around like an alligator's tail, causing her to stumble as she climbs the rocky stair. While Etta's Broom is rigid, Pingril's Broom bounces up and down, bending its shaft at an angle to "look" left and right.

PINGREL
Stop it, you idiot!

She makes her way to Etta, at the base of the boulder.

ETTA
You don't mean to fly that?

Pingrel shakes the Broom and slaps it.

PINGREL
Straighten up!

The Broom becomes rigid.

PINGREL (cont'd)
He'll do exactly what I tell him.

ETTA
The devil's blessing on you. You will need it with that thing.

Etta turns and leaps. Pingrel climbs the boulder. The Broom goes limp. Pingrel holds it at arm's length.

PINGREL
You're going to fly tonight or tomorrow you will be kindling, understand?

The Broom straightens up and Pingrel leaps.

EXT. COLONIAL ROADSIDE INN - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

THREE TRAVELERS and an INN KEEPER exit with a LANTERN.

TRAVELER
I hope the worst thing we see on this road is a bunch of old hags on brooms.

INN KEEPER
I'm warning you. Around these parts people stay inside on All Hallows Eve.

The traveler's TWO COMPANIONS, mounting their horses, laugh. The witches, cackling, fly over the tree tops and down on them. The horses shie, throwing their riders.

Two witches take a Traveler by the shoulders and drag him, heels to the road, rolling into the under brush. Another witch grabs the LANTERN held by the Inn Keeper.

EXT. BARN - MOMENTS LATER

A FATHER and SON struggle to get their sheep into the barn.

SON
Hurry, Father!

Over the pasture, the witches approach. The barn door closes. A witch flies by, throwing the Lantern against it, which explodes in a burst of flame.

EXT. AERIAL VIEW OF WICKET - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

The witches approach the village of Wicket. A white church, lights ablaze, is visible at the edge of the village green.

EXT. CHURCH DOORS

Along with THREE VILLAGERS outside, we see more villagers gathered just inside the open church doors.

VILLAGER 1
(alarmed, pointing skyward)
There they are!

VILLAGER 2
(to crowd gathered at doorway)
Back inside!

The witches swoop down as the doors slam shut. They fly around the building, then ascend, spiraling around the moonlit steeple. Pingrel is last, her foot strikes the church's lightning rod, bending it, as she flies off.

PINGREL
Watch where you're going, imbecile!

EXT. ROAD OUT OF WICKET - COVERED BRIDGE - MOMENTS LATER

One by one, the witches fly through the bridge.

EXT. AIRBORNE - APPROACHING BRIDGE

Pingrel and Etta fall behind as Pingrel urges her Broom along. It lurches forward unevenly, its shaft drooping.

PINGREL
Come on, you fool!

Etta pulls ahead and begins her descent. Pingrel follows. She descends below the tops of the trees lining the road. She pulls up, but the Broom continues to descend.

PINGREL (cont'd)
Up idiot, up!

The bristles scrape the dirt road. It bounces up. They are now too high and we see, from Pingrel's POV, the rapid approach of the top of the covered bridge entrance.

PINGREL (cont'd)
EEIYI!

EXT. WITHIN COVERED BRIDGE

CRASH! Pingrel slams into the bridge entrance. Stripped from the Broom, she falls to the ground. The Broom skids along the wood planked bridge deck, catching its tip between the planks. It flips up, bristles in the air, and then, "crack!". It snaps and falls to the deck. Its tip, almost broken off, is stuck between the planks.

The Broom pulls itself free and stands with its tip hanging from its shaft. It hops to the motionless witch.

PINGREL (cont'd)
(weakly)
Kindling.

The Broom takes a step back.

PINGREL (cont'd)
You're going to make a nice warm fire.

As Pingrel rises shakily, the Broom hops away.

EXT. ROADSIDE BY BRIDGE

The Broom hops down the road as the witch unsteadily sets out after it. In the background a LIGHTNING SPLITTER is visible, a house-style characterized by its odd, steeply pitched roof. The Broom hops off the road and over the underbrush.

PINGREL
I'll pull your bristles out, one by one.

The Broom hides behind a SMALL OAK TREE. It hops up and hooks its broken tip on a branch and begins to swing. At the roadside, Etta lands beside Pingrel.

PINGREL (cont'd)
When I find him I'm going to roast him.

ETTA
Come on, leave him. You can ride with me.

In the background A MAN appears in the open door of the house, holding a lantern.

MAN
Who goes there?

WOMAN
(from inside the house)
Arno, Arno Larsen. Come back in here!

The witches ignore them. Pingrel pushes into the underbrush. Etta follows. Pingrel spots the Broom hiding in the tree.

PINGREL
Oh, there you are. You like the tree?

Pingrel places her hands on the tree trunk, and chants:

PINGREL (cont'd)
Lynsus talo, Zeblim sims / Roots and
berries, Nuts and limbs / Keep your guest

PINGREL (cont'd)
Who hides within / Lynsus talo, Zeblim sims.

WISPS of SMOKE appear at the witch's hands. The tree branches wrap around the struggling Broom, trapping it in the oak sapling. Pingrel laughs. Arno approaches the witches.

ARNO LARSEN
Who goes there?

Pingrel and Etta mount Etta's broom. They roar out of the underbrush and bowl Arno Larsen over. He watches them disappear in the night sky.

The camera holds on the starlit sky, which lightens to the cerulean blue of a sunny day. The camera pans down and we see the lightning-splitter, overgrown and dilapidated. The sapling is now an IMMENSE GOLDEN LEAFED OAK next to a paved road that leads into the covered bridge. On a rope swing, A CHILD swings from the tree.

A small vegetable stand sits between the tree and bridge, with a hand-lettered sign advertising eggs, cider and produce. Beyond the house, the river over which the bridge passes is visible. An old station wagon and TRACTOR are in the driveway beside the house.

A shiny black SUV goes by and passes into the bridge and we realize it's THREE HUNDRED YEARS LATER.

EXT. BASE OF OAK TREE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

Eight year old OWEN SHAW, rides the swing. His face recedes, then fills the frame, recedes, then fills the frame. LUCY, his thirteen year old sister stands watching.

LUCY
C'mon Owen, you've got to get ready.

Owen's face shows a zealous intensity as he pumps higher.

LUCY (cont'd)
(urgent loud whisper)
Owen, C'mon. Mom's coming along. Don't mess it up.

Owen doesn't respond. Lucy goes up the driveway to the tractor. The lower half of a body is visible, dressed in coveralls, lying beneath the tractor. The partly concealed figure struggles with some task, straining - then:

VOICE
Come on, you crummy little piece of...

Lucy approaches the prone figure.

LUCY
Mom. He won't get ready.

A loud banging of metal on metal can be heard.

VOICE
How's that? Want some more?

LUCY
Mom. He won't get off the swing.

The pounding stops. The coveralled figure slides out from beneath the tractor. It is the Widow, MINNA SHAW. In her mid thirties, she is tall and attractive even with the grease smudges on her weathered face. She holds a grease covered part, looks at it, then tosses it a bucket.

MINNA
Piece of junk.

ADDIE LARSEN (Grandma) Minna's spunky octogenarian grandmother exits the back door of the Shaw house.

GRANDMA
Owen! Time to get ready!

Owen responds by pumping higher.

MINNA
Owen! Get down now.

Owen pumps higher still.

LUCY
Uh oh, he's going to do it again.

MINNA
Owen!

Owen launches himself from the swing, flies through the air, stumbles on the grass and falls to a stop, hands first, on the loose gravel driveway.

The women go to him. Owen stares at his scraped hands.

GRANDMA
You alright?

Owen shoves his hands in his pockets.

GRANDMA (cont'd)
Let me see.

Owen shakes his head.

MINNA
He's fine.
(to Owen)
You've got to stop that, understand? You are going to break something. Now go put some clean clothes on.

Owen goes into the house.

LUCY
(to Minna)
What about you? I picked out a dress...

MINNA
I've got too much to do around here.

LUCY
But you said...

MINNA
I said, I might. All right? But I can't. Now just go without me.

Lucy and Grandma watch Minna crawl back under the tractor.

LUCY
I knew she couldn't do it.

EXT. WICKET VILLAGE GREEN

An aerial view looking over the old church steeple with the bent lightning rod. Panning down, we see a quaint New England village green surrounded by red leafed maples. The church parking lot is full. We hear ORGAN MUSIC from within.

INTERIOR CHURCH - SANCTUARY - DAY

REVEREND PETERS, a stern looking sixty year old rises to address his congregation as the mighty organ falls silent.

REVEREND PETERS
As you all know, our annual Harvest Dance is a week away. I hope you've gotten a chance to meet this year's honorary Chairmen, Doug and Jean Spivey. I can't praise this marvelous couple enough.

He pauses and smiles down at the front pew, where DOUG and JEAN SPIVEY, a couple in their late-thirties, overweight and underdressed, sit with their fidgety sons, RUSSELL, age thirteen and DOUG JR, age eleven.

REVEREND PETERS (cont'd)
Just a year ago, before they'd even moved to our community, Doug and Jean visited me and asked, "Reverend, what can we do for the Church"? When I told them we needed to fix the organ they said, "Fix it? Let's get a new one!" Well, today, our church is home to the finest organ in the state. I'd like you all to join me in thanking the good Lord for sending us these wonderful new neighbors.

As the parishioners briefly bow their heads, Doug and Jean Spivey exchange self-satisfied smiles. All rise when the organ begins to play another hymn.

The camera lingers on a parishioner, JACK WILKIE, standing at the back of the congregation, singing with ardor. He is in his twenties, boyish looking, with a military style crew cut.

INT. CHURCH - HALLWAY

A seven-year-old, SALLY, moves quickly down the hall.

INT. CHURCH - SANCTUARY

As the congregation sings, Sally walks down the aisle and stops at a pew. She motions to Lucy and they exit together.

INT. CHURCH - HALLWAY

Sally and Lucy walk quickly down the hall.

SALLY
...pictures for Thanksgiving. You know, like why we were thankful to God.

LUCY
And?

SALLY
He did a bad picture.

INT. CHURCH SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSROOM

Owen, is sitting on top of a tall bookcase, books scattered around its base.

A dozen 5-8 year olds along with MRS. ROBBINS, the sixtyish spinster Sunday School teacher, gaze up at him. Sally and Lucy enter the room.

MRS. ROBBINS
Lucy. We're having a problem here.

LUCY
What's he doing?

MRS. ROBBINS
I wouldn't hang up his picture.

Lucy looks at the picture Mrs. Robbins holds out: a robed figure with an angry bearded monster face, holding lightning bolts. Lucy reads the words printed below in disbelief.

LUCY
"God is dumb and mean too."

Lucy makes a low whistle and looks up at her brother.

LUCY (cont'd)
Owen, get down here.

Owen is unresponsive.

MRS. ROBBINS
I'm afraid your mother's going to have to come in for a talk.

LUCY
Good luck. Mom's awful busy.

Lucy drags a chair over to the bookcase and steps up on it.

LUCY (cont'd)
Don't make me come up there.

Owen leaps from the seven foot tall bookcase.

EXT. CHURCH - A LITTLE LATER

Owen and Lucy sit on a bench by the church steps watching the Spivey family drive off in their shiny black SUV.

LUCY
Geez, Owen. "God is dumb". It's, like, Sunday school. You can think stuff like that but you can't write it down.

INT. SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSROOM

Mrs. Robbins speaks to Granny, who holds Owen's picture.

MRS. ROBBINS
...very uncommunicative. Never says a word. Then he does something like this.

GRANDMA
Well, the boy's had some troubles.

MRS. ROBBINS
Gracious, Addie, I know he has. What's it been, two years now? Losing his dad must have been hard, but he seemed to be doing pretty well.

GRANDMA
Yep, seemed to be. Then we lost Uncle Jeepers. Boy took a nose dive.

MRS. ROBBINS
Oh, I'm sorry. Another family member?

GRANDMA
Naw. Pet rabbit. Gift from his dad. Owen had him almost seven years. Critter gave up the ghost back in July.

EXT. CHURCH

Sally walks by and pauses in front of Owen.

SALLY
Are you okay?

Owen nods but doesn't speak.

SALLY (cont'd)
(to Lucy)
Why does he do that?

LUCY
Do what?

SALLY
Jump off stuff. He does it at school, too.

LUCY
(shrugging her shoulders)
Making sure gravity works.

EXT. WIDOW'S DRIVEWAY

Minna sits astride the tractor. It belches black exhaust. She guns the engine a few times, kills it and then dismounts to collect her tools.

EXT. ROAD AND COVERED BRIDGE

The Spivey SUV exits the bridge, hitting a large pumpkin sitting at the edge of the road by the vegetable stand.

INT. SPIVEY SUV

DOUG JR.
Good shot, Dad.

The Spivey family laughs.

EXT. SPIVEY DRIVEWAY.

Doug Spivey pulls into one of two driveways just beyond the vegetable stand and waits for an ornate gate to open.

EXT. DRIVEWAY BY SHAW HOUSE

Minna wipes her hands on a rag, glowering at the Spiveys.

INT. SPIVEY SUV

Jean Spivey spies Minna.

JEAN
Oh God, I think she saw you, Doug.

SPIVEY
Big deal. She shouldn't put 'em so close to the road.

EXT. SPIVEY DRIVEWAY

The gates open. Spivey is about to go forward when a cluster of acorns hits the hood of the SUV. Spivey leaps out.

DOUG, JR.
What's wrong, Dad?

Spivey inspects the hood, and looks up malevolently at the golden leafed tree. Within the rustling leaves we can make out THE BROOM, now entwined in thick gnarled oak branches.

SPIVEY
Damn acorns.

JEAN
Come on, Doug.

As Spivey's SUV proceeds up the driveway, a startling sight, not seen earlier, comes into view. Looming over the little lightning splitter and its river side setting, elevated on the sloping terrain, is a huge contemporary "TROPHY HOUSE".

EXT. WIDOW'S DRIVEWAY -A LITTLE LATER

The old station wagon pulls in with Granny, Lucy and Owen. Lucy gets out first. Minna approaches.

MINNA
How was church?

LUCY
Maybe you ought to come some time, see for yourself.

MINNA
You know how much work I've got to...

LUCY
(in a sing-song mocking voice)
Chop the wood, feed the chickens, pick the apples, chop the wood, feed the chickens, pick the apples...

Lucy turns and goes inside. Minna stares at her, frozen, then goes to the vegetable stand as Owen climbs back onto the rope swing.

EXT. VEGETABLE STAND

Granny joins Minna, who tosses pumpkin bits into a bucket.

GRANDMA
Somebody hit one?

MINNA
That jerk next door.

GRANDMA
Doesn't surprise me.
(beat)
You should have been in church today, Minna. Seems Owen shared his doubts about the wisdom of the Supreme Being.

She hands Minna the picture. Minna looks at it.

MINNA
He's entitled to his own opinion.

GRANDMA
Cripes, Minna. Boy hasn't said ten words since July. Now this.

MINNA
It's just the rabbit. He'll get over it.

Granny shakes her head as Minna looks in the "Honor" CIGAR BOX at the vegetable stand and takes out some money, then arranges the bottles of cider and jars of APPLE BUTTER.

GRANDMA
Looks like the apple butter's selling good. Heard some folks at church say it's your best ever.

MINNA
Good. Maybe we can sell enough to get the roof fixed.

Minna lifts the wheelbarrow and heads back up the drive with Grandma. Owen is swinging back and forth like a pendulum. Minna stops, embittered, looking up at Spivey's monstrosity.

MINNA (cont'd)
If I could just undo it, I'd give every penny back. To look over there and see...see nothing but a meadow and...

GRANDMA
Now don't start agitating yourself again. There is never going to be "nothing but a meadow there", ever. What's done is done. Bank was about to take the land anyway. Besides, selling wasn't the mistake. It was trusting Mr. Big Shot.
(she snorts dismissively)
"Little log cabin", my eye.

MINNA
I'm afraid Mr. Big Shot is not going to be happy til he's got this place, too.

INT. SPIVEY LIVING ROOM

The living room is an immense white carpeted space with chrome and white leather furniture. Large windows look out toward the river with Minna's property in between. Jean Spivey stands beside a diaphanous curtain gazing down at Minna Shaw and Grandma. Her husband enters.

JEAN
(aggrieved, slightly desperate)
This is a nightmare, Doug.

He joins her at the window. Though the Widow's home is charming from some points of view, the Spiveys look out over a sagging barn, a rusty tractor, clothes on the line, messy piles of cord wood, and chickens in an old hen house.

JEAN (cont'd)
We finally build our dream house. But I wake up in the morning and go to the window and see.... That!

SPIVEY
I know. Her chickens, that tractor...

JEAN
And look at those sheets flapping around, for God's sake.
(she leans toward the window)
Haven't you people ever heard of a clothes dryer?

She watches Minna mount the tractor and go up the driveway. Spivey puts his hand on his wife's shoulder to calm her.

JEAN (cont'd)
You said she'd sell once we moved in.

SPIVEY
Last offer I made was five times what the place is worth. People like her...

He is interrupted by the sound of a barking dog. Doug Jr. and Russell, holding a nasty looking white bull terrier on a chain, appear at the living room doorway. Spivey approaches.

RUSSELL
Dougie got too close to the chickens.

SPIVEY
Boy, he sure goes nutty when he gets a whiff of those birds. If he ever got a hold of one he'd probably...

Spivey looks down at the dog contemplatively.

JEAN
What is it, Doug?

SPIVEY
Maybe our neighbor'd change her mind if she had a little more bad luck.

Blitz barks excitedly.

EXT. SHAW HOUSE - MORNING, SEVERAL DAYS LATER

Lucy crosses to the hen house carrying a basket.

INT. WIDOW'S KITCHEN

Minna's kitchen is a cozy place with ancient appliances, soapstone sink and a wood burning stove. Minna is cooking. Grandma sits at the kitchen table.

Owen stands in front of Grandma, dressed in a black cape, breaches, white stockings and a band of black cloth covering one eye. He holds a walking stick. She positions a tricorn hat on his head and looks at a picture of Blind Pew from "Treasure Island", comparing the picture to the boy.

GRANDMA
Well, there you go, Owen. Just like you wanted. Blind Pew. Show your Mom.

Owen approaches Minna, tapping his stick, pantomiming blindness. He takes his mother's hand and puts a piece of paper in it. Minna looks at it - a black spot.

GRANDMA (cont'd)
Blind Pew gives it to people before they die. He's got lots of them.

EXT. WIDOW'S HEN HOUSE

Lucy, visibly upset, exits and rushes to the house.

INT. WIDOW'S KITCHEN

The back door flies open. Lucy enters.

LUCY
Fox! In the hen house. Got six of them.

EXT. WIDOW'S HEN HOUSE

The Shaw family surveys the carnage.

GRANDMA
This wasn't any fox.

MINNA
No... No, it sure wasn't. I've got a pretty good idea what it was.

GRANDMA
(angrily)
Me, too.

EXT. SPIVEY MANSION

Minna rings the bell beside the oversized doors repeatedly. Spivey answers in his bathroble followed by a docile Blitz.

SPIVEY
Why Mrs. Shaw, what an unexpected pleasure. Won't you come in?

MINNA
This isn't a social call. Your dog's been in my hen house. I've got six dead chicken to prove it.

SPIVEY
You must be mistaken. Blitz would never do a thing like that, would you boy?
(pats the dog)

Minna eyes the dog and his master suspiciously.

MINNA
You keep that dog off my property.

SPIVEY
I assure you, Mrs. Shaw, he hasn't been on your property.

Minna turns and walks away. Spivey calls out to her.

SPIVEY (cont'd)
Say, given any thought to my offer?

INT. SHAW KITCHEN

Lucy and Grandma sit eating breakfast. Minna drops her plate heavily on the table and throws herself into a chair.

LUCY
You think he did it on purpose?

MINNA
Probably, that creep.

GRANDMA
He thinks he's running us off, he's got another thing coming.

Sounds issue from the open door leading to the cellar.

MINNA
(impatiently)
Owen! What's he doing down there?

INT. WIDOW'S BASEMENT

Owen rummages through a pile of forgotten objects - skis, a tennis racket his dad's old boots. His mother calls again.

MINNA (cont'd)
(o.s.)
Owen!

INT. SHAW KITCHEN

Owen emerges from the cellar with a rusty shotgun. Minna rises, alarmed. She takes the gun away from Owen.

MINNA
What are you doing with this?

Owen angrily points in the direction of the Spivey's.

GRANDMA
I like the way the boy's thinking.

Grandma takes the gun from Minna and looks down the barrel.

GRANDMA (cont'd)
Next time that dog comes around here, he's a gonner.

LUCY
Forget the dog, we oughta just shoot Spivey.

Minna takes the gun away from Granny.

MINNA
We aren't shooting anybody or anything. At least not today.

The old kitchen clock chimes.

MINNA (cont'd)
You kids need to get ready. The bus'll be here soon.

EXT. WIDOW'S FRONT PORCH - A LITTLE LATER

The door opens. Lucy and Owen exit. Minna follows, holding a brown bag. The school bus pulls up.

MINNA
Owen, you forgot your...

She stops when she sees a RED DUMP TRUCK by the giant oak that stands between the two driveways. THREE WOOD CUTTERS, WAYNE, DARYL and CHUCK, stand at the base of the tree.

LUCY
What are they doing?

Minna doesn't take her eyes off the men.

MINNA
(repressing anger)
Come on, you'll be late.

She marches down the porch steps with Lucy. Owen leaps.

EXT. DRIVEWAY BY OAK TREE

At the end of the driveway, Minna, Lucy and Owen stop.

LUCY
Mom, what's going on?

MINNA
You and your brother get on the bus.

The children go to the bus, looking back at their mother. Minna approaches the men. The wood-cutters are a scruffy crew, dressed in overalls and flannel shirts, all in need of a shave. Wayne is in a harness, ready to go aloft.

MINNA (cont'd)
What are you doing here?

CHUCK
(nodding up driveway)
Ask him.

Spivey approaches, in a velour jogging suit, sipping coffee.

SPIVEY
Ah, good morning again, Mrs. Shaw.

Owen and Lucy follow the Spivey boys onto the bus.

MINNA
What's going on? What are they doing?

SPIVEY
I've got a problem with this tree.

MINNA
What kind of problem?

SPIVEY
It's dropping acorns.

MINNA
It's an oak tree. What do you expect?

SPIVEY
Well, they're falling on my car. It's gotta' go.

MINNA
You can't be serious.

SPIVEY
Listen, this tree is on my property. I'll do what I want with it.

He nods to the tree cutter in the harness.

SPIVEY (cont'd)
What are you waiting for? Go on.

Wayne begins to ascend the tree. Minna grabs him by the leg.

MINNA
Get out of that tree.

Daryl restrains her from behind. She takes a swing at him.

INT. SCHOOL BUS

Owen and Lucy step aboard, looking out the windows, across the road. The other kids and the bus driver stare too.

Minna puts a head-lock on Daryl and pulls him to the ground, kicking at Chuck as he tries to pull her off. Owen, unnoticed by Lucy and the driver, jumps out of the bus.

EXT. FRONT OF WIDOW'S

As the bus rolls away into the bridge, Owen flies across the road and leaps on Chuck's back. Spivey and Wayne grab at him as he vigorously kicks his legs. It's a free for all.

Granny exits the house with the shotgun and walks down the porch steps. She aims high and lets off a shot. It hits a branch, showering Spivey with acorns and twigs.

INT. SCHOOL BUS

Lucy sits with a female classmate, and takes an envelope out of her backpack, running her finger along the edge.

CLASSMATE
Wow, your mom is like really...uh...

LUCY
Crazy.

CLASSMATE
Well, she did look kind of, you know...

LUCY
Crazy. OK That's the word you're looking for. Crazy.

Lucy stares at the envelop in her hands.

CLASSMATE
What is that?

LUCY
My ticket out of here. An application to Briarcliff.

CLASSMATE
Are you serious? That boarding school? With a bunch of rich kids.

LUCY
Miss Taylor says I've got a good shot at a scholarship.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - A FEW MINUTES LATER

A speeding police car traveling in the opposite direction goes by the school bus, SIREN WAILING.

EXT. ROAD IN FRONT OF WIDOW'S HOUSE

The police car exits the covered bridge and pulls up next to Minna's vegetable stand. Jack Wilkie gets out, adjusting his sunglasses and Troopers hat.

Wayne, Darryl and Chuck are hunkered down beside their truck.

WAYNE
You'd a told me back in High School I'd be wrestling with Minna Larsen some day, I'd think I was a pretty lucky guy.

The other two wood-cutters laugh.

WAYNE (cont'd)
Geez, you remember watching her dance?

DARYL
Yeah, sure was something to look at then.

CHUCK
Problem was, Dick Shaw catch you looking at her, he'd twist your head off.

The wood-cutters share another laugh. Jack approaches them.

CHUCK (cont'd)
Look here, Vermont's newest State Trooper. Nice uniform, man. You look like a regular Eagle Scout.

WAYNE
Hey Jack, ready for a cold winter?

JACK
You bet. I love the snow. One of the reasons I moved back here.
(beat)
What's going on? Radio said something about a gunshot.

INT. WIDOW'S FRONT HALL

Minna, Granny and Owen look out the window.

MINNA
Great. Spivey called the police.

GRANDMA
(stifling laughter)
Look, Owen. Here he comes.

EXT. SPIVEY DRIVEWAY.

Spivey, like a G.I. under fire, moves down his driveway.

EXT. WOODCUTTERS TRUCK

CHUCK
Eighteen wheeler out on 37. Rear ended him. Couple years ago.

DARRYL
(nodding toward house)
She kind of lost her marbles when he died.

Darryl taps his head with his finger.

WAYNE
Never leaves the place now, turned into some kind of hermit or something.

CHUCK
You probably remember her. Name was Larsen before she got married.

JACK
Minna Larsen...yeah, I remember her. I was just a kid but she was a Homecoming Queen, wasn't she?

DARYL
Yeah, that's the one. A real knockout.

Jack looks at the Shaw house.

JACK
(quietly, wistfully)
Sure, I remember her.

CHUCK
Might not recognize her now.

Spivey arrives at the truck. Jack tips his hat to him.

SPIVEY
These fellows explain what happened?

JACK
Yes, sir.

SPIVEY
What's our plan? We need some backup?

JACK
Well, sir, I think I'll just go up there, see what's on their minds.

SPIVEY
It's your funeral.

EXT. WIDOW'S FRONT YARD

Jack opens a rusty gate and passes under a vine covered arbor. The house's weathered shingles need paint, a few shutters are askew. He stops at the sagging porch steps.

JACK
Hello?

He climbs up the steps. The door opens and Jack sees Minna in the doorway, holding the shotgun. He goes for his sidearm.

JACK.
Ma'am, can you put that gun down?

Minna ignores his request, coming out onto the porch.

MINNA
Can't you put a stop to--

JACK
Ma'am, the gun.

Minna puts the gun aside.

JACK.
Could you tell me what's going on, Ma'am?

MINNA
That idiot is about to cut down a tree simply because...

JACK
Excuse me, ma'am. It's my understanding the tree is on his property.

MINNA
Well, it is, but...but that's not the point. He can't just cut a...

Jack holds up his hand to silence Minna.

JACK
Yes he can. It's his right. Our problem here is not the tree, ma'am. He claims your Grandmother took a shot at him.

MINNA
That's ridiculous. She wasn't aiming at anyone. She was only trying...

INT. WIDOW'S FRONT HALL

Granny, not visible to Jack, looks out the window.

GRANDMA
If I had another shot I'd nail that...

EXT. PORCH

Jack hears, indistinctly, Granny's voice.

JACK
Is that her? I'm going to have to speak to her, ma'am. This is pretty serious.

Minna steps aside, admitting Jack into the cluttered house.

INT. WIDOW'S FRONT HALL

Jack surveys the place, crowded with the accumulation of generations of the Shaw family. His eyes fall on Granny. He removes his sunglasses and hat. Owen steps out of the shadows in his odd costume and stares at Jack with his "Children of the Corn" look. Jack is a little unnerved.

JACK
Officer Wilkie, Ma'am.

GRANDMA
Pleased to meet you. Addie Larsen
(shakes his hand)
This is Owen.
(Owen stands like a statue)
I'm glad you're here. I want you to arrest him.

JACK
Who?

GRANDMA
Spivey! He killed our chickens.

JACK
I thought this was about the oak tree.

GRANDMA (cont'd)
That, too, that lousy son of a...

MINNA
(chastising)
Grandma, Officer Wilkie needs to know that the gun went off accidentally.

GRANDMA
What? Oh yes. Of course.

She tries to charm Jack, going to him to touch his arm.

GRANDMA (cont'd)
You know, dear, I didn't even know it was loaded. Really, I didn't.

Jack goes to the door and picks up the gun.

JACK.
Could you step outside a minute, Ma'am?

EXT. WIDOW'S FRONT PORCH

Jack and Minna exit the front door. Spivey and the wood-cutters stare from the end of the driveway.

JACK
I don't want to have to arrest your grandmother, but...

MINNA
What are you talking about?

JACK
She did take a shot at your neighbor.

MINNA
She was just trying to get his attention.

Jack rubs the back of his neck, pondering his next move.

JACK.
Well, I'm going to give you the benefit of the doubt, Ma'am. But I think it would be a good idea if we keep this at the police station for the time being.

He picks up the shotgun.

JACK
Your Grandma have access to any other firearms?

Minna shakes her head: no.

JACK (cont'd)
Okay. I'll try to straighten this out.

He tips his hat to Minna and descends the porch steps, the bannister wobbly under his hands. He stops and turns back.

JACK (cont'd)
Ought to fix this before somebody falls.

Minna nods and watches Jack go to Spivey, who is not happy. He points to the widow's house, making the "koo koo" sign, twirling his finger at the side of his head. He throws his hands up and motions to the wood-cutters to get to work.

EXT. VEGETABLE STAND

Jack is about to get into his car when Minna calls out.

MINNA
Officer Wilkie!

Minna hurries to the car, pulling Owen by the hand. She stops at the vegetable stand and takes a jar of apple butter.

MINNA (cont'd)
Are you headed back to town?

JACK
Yes, ma'am.

MINNA
Owen missed the bus this morning. Could you possibly...

JACK
Give him a lift? Sure. Hop in, son.

Owen gets in the car.

MINNA
Thanks for understanding about my grandmother. She's an old lady and...

JACK
No thanks necessary, Ma'am. The modern police officer is trained to resolve these conflicts. Just doing my job.

MINNA
Here, take this, anyway.

She hands him the jar of apple butter.

JACK
We can't accept gifts, Ma'am.

He attempts to hand it back to her.

MINNA
It's just a jar of apple butter.

JACK
Sorry ma'am, it's the rules.

Jack goes to the stand to put the jar back, but sees the display ("apple butter $3.00") and takes his wallet out, puts money in the cigar box and slides the jar into his pocket.

MINNA
That wasn't necessary.

Jack tips his hat.

JACK
I'm sure it's delicious.

He climbs in the car, pulls away. Minna waves goodbye to Owen as the chain saws break the silence. After Minna goes inside, Spivey sneaks up to the vegetable stand.

INT. SPIVEY KITCHEN

Jean Spivey enters the vast granite and stainless steel space and sees an APPLE BUTTER JAR on the counter. Spivey enters from a another doorway followed by a yapping Blitz.

JEAN
What's he so excited about?

Spivey holds up a tiny desiccated mouse body. Jean recoils.

SPIVEY
From the mouse trap I put in the garage.

Spivey goes to the jar and lays out the mouse. Jean watches him spoon out apple butter to make room for the mouse.

SPIVEY (cont'd)
Another unpleasant surprise for our neighbor. Her business is about to take a dive. You know how these small town people talk.
(he laughs diabolically)
Once somebody gets a hold of this...

INT. CRUISER

Jack attempts to engage Owen in conversation.

JACK
I got it! Zorro. No? A pilgrim. You're a pilgrim. Like uh...Miles...What Was his name? Sandwich. Miles Sandwich.

Owen is silent, frowning. Jack tries to recall the name.

JACK (cont'd)
Standish! Miles Standish. You're Miles...

Owen reaches into his pocket and takes out a black spot. He hands it to Jack.

JACK (cont'd)
What's this? Oh! Wait. O.K. I got it. I got it. You're...Blind Pew, from Treasure Island!

Owen's frown softens and he slowly nods his head.

JACK (cont'd)
(gravely, sincerely)
Hey, wait a minute. This is bad luck. I don't want this.

Owen stares at him as Jack holds out the spot.

JACK (cont'd)
C'mon, take it back. I mean it.

Owen extends his open hand and Jack gives him the spot.

JACK (cont'd)
Don't mess around with that mumbo jumbo.

EXT. FRONT OF WICKET SCHOOL

School buses unload. Doug Jr. and Russell step out last, as Jack's cruiser pulls up and Owen gets out. The Spivey boys wait as he walks toward the school entrance, then fall in behind him with a couple of their pals.

DOUG, JR.
Hey man, what happened? You get arrested for being such a dork?

RUSSELL
No no. That's not it. It's against the law to have a wacko for a mother.

DOUG, JR.
Hey, we heard your mom is going to be on TV - Big Time Wrestling.

Owen turns and faces the boys.

RUSSELL
Oh gosh, Doug, I think he's going to say something.

DOUG, JR.
(affecting a stutter))
R...r...r..really, I c..c.can't.. wait.

Owen reaches into his pocket, gives them both a black spot.

EXT. ROAD IN FRONT OF WIDOW'S HOUSE - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

The Oak Tree is now gone. The school bus pulls up. Lucy and Owen exit and run across the road to their mother, who is dragging a tree limb away from the oak stump, where other remains of the tree are visible.

MINNA
Well, did your brother tell you what happened?

LUCY
What, the great sphinx here? I know what happened. You acted like some kind of insane person.

MINNA
Well, that's not all. Granny took a shot at Spivey. He called the police.
(beat)
Boy you should have seen him run when that gun went off.

Minna chuckles, but Lucy just stares at her.

MINNA (cont'd)
What's the matter, Luce?

LUCY
It's not funny. Not Granny, Not Spivey. Not you. 'Specially not you.

MINNA
Lucy!

LUCY
The whole bus saw you today. It's bad enough I'm the girl with the dead dad and the silent brother. Now I'm the girl with the crazy mom, too. What's next?!

MINNA
I was saving a tree that...

Lucy kicks a branch.

LUCY
Nice job.

Lucy goes to the house.

MINNA
(pulling branch)
C'mon Owen, give me a hand with this.

Owen stoops to grab a limb of the branch and discovers his rope swing. He holds it up mournfully.

MINNA (cont'd)
I'm sorry, sweetheart.

EXT. WOOD PILE - BACK DOOR

Minna and Owen drag the branch and drop it by other branches.

EXT. VEGETABLE STAND - COVERED BRIDGE.

Jack's cruiser comes out of the bridge. It parks in front of the widow's. A small OAK SAPLING sticks out of the trunk.

EXT. WIDOW'S DRIVEWAY - A LITTLE LATER

Minna and Owen walk toward the oak stump. Owen spots the sapling standing in front of the arbor gate and goes to it.

MINNA
What is that, Owen?

Minna follows him to the tree. She takes a note held beneath the twine that wraps the root ball and reads:

MINNA (cont'd)
"Plant it today, you'll feel better.
Your local law enforcement officer, Jack
Wilkie".
(beat)
Now, isn't that nice?

EXT. END OF DRIVEWAY BY FALLEN OAK

Water spills from a hose at the base of the newly planted sapling, close to the giant stump of its predecessor. Minna holds a shovel. Owen is at the house faucet.

MINNA
That's enough.

Owen turns off the faucet, and joins his mother. They gaze at the scrawny tree.

MINNA (cont'd)
Well, it will take a few hundred years. C'mon let's get the rest of this wood.

Owen goes to the pile of tree limbs. He drags one off the pile and notices something. He tugs on it. Minna approaches, looking over Owen's shoulder into the leafy branches.

MINNA (cont'd)
It looks like an old broom.

Owen yanks THE BROOM caught within gnarled tree branches.

MINNA (cont'd)
Don't Owen. It's already broken. See?

Minna points to the shaft, split a foot down from the top.

MINNA (cont'd)
Go to the barn and get my tool box.

INT. BARN

Owen enters and picks up a wooden tool box.

EXT. WOOD PILE - BACK DOOR

Minna is seated on the back steps, using a pruning saw to make the final cut on the branches, freeing the Broom. She gently moves the splintered tip.

MINNA
Hand me some twine.

Owen hands her a ball of twine from the tool box. She begins to whip the break, wrapping it tightly with twine.

MINNA (cont'd)
I guess I didn't set a very good example for you this morning?

Owen shrugs his shoulders.

MINNA (cont'd)
Violence is no way for people to settle differences. You understand that, right?

Owen nods and hangs his head.

MINNA (cont'd)
(anger building)
Unless of course you're dealing with a bunch of jerk-off losers who haven't got the brains, decency, or common sense to realize how completely...

Minna looks up from her work to see Owen staring at her. She laughs at her ranting self.

MINNA (cont'd)
Anyway, thanks for coming to my rescue. The fact is, I was proud. You were just like your daddy. He was a gentle man, but he never shied away from a fight. I used to call him Richard the Lion Hearted. You've got the lion's heart. Not his roar, but...

She gives her son a kiss. The repair completed, Minna stands, holding the Broom.

MINNA (cont'd)
There, good as new. Say, we haven't carved our pumpkin yet.

EXT. VEGETABLE GARDEN BEHIND WIDOW'S HOUSE

Owen's hands spread leaves to reveal two very small pumpkins. Minna stands beside him. He looks up.

MINNA
Sorry, just the runts left. I had to put the big ones out front.

INT. WIDOW'S LIVING ROOM

Lucy is at a table with her school books, speaking to Granny. Minna enters from the kitchen, smoking a pipe.

LUCY
...just about died I was so embarrassed.

MINNA
Want to help carve the pumpkin?

LUCY
See, that's what I mean. Why does she have to smoke Dad's old pipe? How many of my friends have mothers walking around with a pipe stuck in their mouths.

MINNA
I just like the smell. Is there something wrong with that? It's not like somebody is going to see me.

LUCY
Exactly. You haven't left this place in years. Nobody ever sees you.

She gathers up her homework and goes up the stairs.

GRANDMA
You know, Minna, she's got a point there. You look like Popeye for pity sake.

Minna puffs on her pipe, staring at Granny through the smoke. She notices an envelope lying at the foot of the stairs and picks it up. It is unsealed. Puzzled by the envelope's address, she opens it and reads.

GRANDMA (cont'd)
What's that?

INT. LUCY'S BEDROOM

Lucy lies on her bed. There is a knock on the door.

LUCY
Yeah.

Minna enters holding the Briarcliff letter.

MINNA
You dropped this.

Lucy looks up, shrugs her shoulders.

MINNA (cont'd)
Lucy, this place is over three hours drive from here.

LUCY
Further the better.

MINNA
What do you mean? You really want to... want to live somewhere else, away from your family?

LUCY
You know what I want, Mom? I want to be like other kids. I want to be normal.

LUCY (cont'd)
I'm tired of living in the eighteenth century. We get three crummy channels on our TV. I can't watch what my friends watch. We don't even have a DVD player. We dry our clothes on a line. I just want to live in the real world.

MINNA
Lucy, this is the real world.

LUCY
Maybe for some sad old widow like you...

An uncomfortable silence passes. Minna holds out the envelope.

MINNA
Well, it's a good school.
(beat)
We can talk about it later.

A sullen Lucy takes the envelope.

INT. KITCHEN DUSK

Minna and Owen busy themselves at the table carving the runt pumpkin. Behind them, the Broom leans against the counter.

Grandma shuffles in and checks out the Broom. Suddenly, it straightens up. Granny jerks back. The Broom's shaft arches, then trembles and falls to the floor with a CLACK.

MINNA
What do you think of that, Grandma? It was stuck in the tree. Ever seen a broom like that?

GRANDMA
It's a lot like that one there.

She nods towards a similar OLD BROOM hung decoratively over the kitchen doorway.

GRANDMA (cont'd)
This one's different though.

MINNA
I know. The braiding is very unusual.

GRANDMA
That's because it's a Witch's Broom.

Grandma opens the back door, and begins sliding the Broom across the floor with her foot. Lucy enters the room.

LUCY
Granny, what are you doing?

GRANDMA
Getting this thing out of here.

Minna rises. She goes to Granny and puts her arm around her.

MINNA
Why do you think this is a Witch's Broom?

GRANDMA
Saw it wiggling around.

Minna kneels and picks up the Broom.

GRANDMA (cont'd)
Ooo, Minna, don't touch it.

Minna goes to a kitchen closet and puts the Broom inside.

MINNA
What do you think? Is that okay?

Granny checks the old hammered iron door latch.

GRANDMA
I guess that will do.

LUCY
(under her breath, to Minna)
Great, one more lunatic in the family.

EXT. WIDOW'S FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

The pumpkin is carved and lit. Owen places it on the steps.

INT. WIDOW'S FRONT DOOR/HALL

Minna kneels, helping Owen with his coat. Lucy is behind her.

MINNA
Now, I don't want you dragging Granny to every house in Wicket. All that candy...

LUCY
I don't even want to go.

Minna stands and turns to Lucy, whispering:

MINNA
Somebody's gotta yell "trick or treat". He can't.

LUCY
Won't. There's nothing wrong with him.
(challenging)
Why don't you take him? Granny won't mind if you borrow her costume.

From a chair, she picks up a witch's hat and puts it on her mother's head.

LUCY (cont'd)
There. You're all set. Go.

Minna gives her daughter an annoyed look. About to respond, she is interrupted by a loud scraping sound.

INT. WIDOW'S KITCHEN

At the doorway, Minna and the children watch Grandma push the table against the broom closet.

GRANDMA
Heard that Broom moving around in there. Come here, Owen, give me a hand.

He goes to the table, but stops. He puts his head against the closet door. He jerks back.

MINNA
It's probably just a mouse.

From the closet there is a "tap tap" sound, then "Crash!" - wood splinters as the TIP OF THE BROOM plunges through the wooden door. Grandma pulls Owen to the corner of the room, Lucy stands at the doorway.

GRANDMA
Criminy!

LUCY
M...m...Mom?

The tip of the Broom bends at a soft right angle. It rotates from left to right like a periscope. It straightens and extends itself, reaching down to undo the closet latch. It withdraws back into the closet.

The door swings open and The Broom shuffles out. Surveying its surroundings, its panning motion stops at the Widow, still in the witch's hat.

It slides forward and its tip moves over Minna eagerly, like a sniffing dog. Minna steps backward. The Broom moves with her. The Widow inches back toward Lucy.

LUCY (cont'd)
(fearful)
Mom.

MINNA
(eyeing the Broom)
Lucy, go open the front door.

Lucy opens the door. Minna turns and rushes out. The Broom follows, trying to keep up.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - VEGETABLE STAND

Minna hurries down the steps. The Broom bounces after her but trips at the bottom. The widow, surprised, stops. The Broom pulls itself up and starts hopping toward her.

She runs to the end of the driveway, hiding behind the vegetable stand. The Broom shuffles closer. Minna grabs APPLES, tossing them at the Broom, forcing it into the road.

A vehicle approaches from within the covered bridge. Its lights grow brighter, its sound louder. The Broom freaks out and hops into the woods as Spivey's SUV roars by, passing through the open gate and up the Spivey driveway.

Minna steps onto the road. The Broom disappears into the dark forest. Suddenly, Owen darts out from behind her, running after the Broom.

MINNA
Owen!

She catches her son. They listen to the leaves and twigs crunching in the thick woods. Then she walks up the driveway, pulling Owen by the hand. Lucy and Grandma are on the porch.

LUCY
Mom, what was that?

MINNA
I don't know. I...

GRANDMA
I told you. I told you what it was.
It's a witch's broom.

MINNA
We better get inside. C'mon.

INT. WIDOW'S LIVING ROOM

Granny pokes the fire as Minna and Owen peer out the window. Lucy is on the sofa.

LUCY
There aren't really witches, are there? You know, the kind with brooms?

GRANDMA
Well not anymore. But there used to be.

LUCY
What happened?

GRANDMA
I don't know. Guess they all died out.

MINNA
(mocking)
Like dinosaurs?

GRANDMA
(ponders - likes the idea)
Yes, like dinosaurs.

LUCY
A big meteor killed the dinosaurs. What happened to witches?

GRANDMA
(shrugs her shoulders)
Science, progress. People stopped believing in them. Once that happened it was all over. Dinosaurs, dodo birds, witches, all gone. Extinct, so to speak.

Minna and Owen continue to look out the window.

MINNA
Oh, Grandma, there were never any witches going around with pointy hats and brooms.

GRANDMA
Oh no? How do you think the lightning rod on the church got bent?

MINNA
That's just an old story people tell at Halloween. Nobody believes it.

GRANDMA
How about your ancestor, Arno Larsen? The man who built this house --

Owen looks at her, puzzled.

GRANDMA (cont'd)
Your Mom never told you?
(Owen shakes his head)
That night, that same Halloween night the witches flew around the church and bent the lightning rod, Arno Larsen walked out that door...
(points to door)
And got knocked over by two of them flying together on a Broom.

MINNA
That's a bunch of baloney. Three hundred year old baloney.

GRANDMA
Okay, then what was that just chased you out of the house?

Minna turns from the window. Her family looks at her.

MINNA
It was...it was a...it was a...

She turns back to the window, speechless.

LUCY
It was like, totally creepy. That's what it was.

MINNA
I think we need to call the police.

LUCY
You can't do that! You know what happens when people report stuff like that, like UFO's and little green guys?

GRANDMA
What happens?

LUCY
(building to hysteria)
The whole world thinks you're a weirdo. We may as well walk around wearing t-shirts with "Nut Job" printed on them.

LUCY (cont'd)
I mean, It's bad enough already. Are we going to be the family that saw a...

MINNA
All right, all right. I get your point.

EXT. ROADSIDE

The Broom hops out of the woods and looks cautiously into the darkened covered bridge.

INT. OWEN'S BEDROOM

Model airplanes hang from the ceiling. A propeller is mounted over the bed. Minna tucks Owen in.

MINNA
I know you want to go look for that thing, Owen, but you know what? Lucy's got the right idea. Tomorrow we're gonna' wake up and pretend this never happened. We'll think of it as a dream, a dream we had together and we won't mention it to anyone.

Minna kisses Owen and exits. He moves his pillow and opens the curtains at the foot of his bed to look out the window.

EXT. SHAW DRIVEWAY - LATER

The Broom shuffles up the drive, sweeping. The house is dark.

INT. OWEN'S BEDROOM

Owen, on the edge of sleep, hears the sound of the Broom. He looks out the window, jumps out of bed excitedly.

EXT. BACK DOOR STOOP - WIDOW'S HOUSE

Owen exits the back door in his pajamas and coat holding a coil of rope.

EXT. ROAD IN FRONT OF WIDOW'S HOUSE

Voices echo from inside the bridge. The Broom turns and shuffles back toward the road, reaching the end of the driveway as the Spivey boys exit the bridge and approach on their bikes, holding their trick or treat bags and wearing ghoul masks. The Broom stands still but "watches" them, rotating its bent shaft as they roll by.

RUSSELL
Hey, look at that!

DOUG, JR.
What a cool Halloween decoration!

They dismount their bikes and lift their masks to inspect the Broom, amazed that it follows their every move.

RUSSELL
It must have some kind of electric eye.

Russell looks toward the darkened widow's house.

RUSSELL (cont'd)
Let's take it.

He reaches out to grab the Broom and it raps him on the hand.

RUSSELL (cont'd)
Ouch!

He reaches out again.

EXT. DRIVEWAY BY HOUSE

Owen, searching, hears Russell's exclamation and sees the Spivey boys and the Broom.

EXT. ROAD BY WIDOW'S

Russell self-pityingly rubs his knuckles.

DOUG, JR.
That's awesome! It must have some kind of little motors inside it.

Russell picks up a large branch from the fallen oak.

RUSSELL
Lets see what it's got inside.

Russell takes a swing and the Broom ducks. Enraged, he takes another swing and the Broom bends, causing him to miss again.

RUSSELL (cont'd)
Doug, you get a stick, too.

Doug, Jr. picks up a stick and they start circling the Broom.

EXT. WIDOW'S DRIVEWAY - CORNER OF HOUSE

Owen watches as the boys swing wildly. The Broom ducks and Doug, Jr. clocks Russell, who drops to the ground.

RUSSELL
It hit me. It hit me.

Doug Jr. takes another swing. The Broom wraps its shaft around the stick. Doug, Jr. holds it tightly as Russell gets to his feet, ready to club the Broom.

The Broom yanks the stick from Doug, Jr.. The momentum carries the stick around and Russell gets whacked and goes down again.

The Spivey boys run up their driveway with the Broom hopping behind them holding the branch.

EXT. BETWEEN WIDOW'S AND SPIVEY'S DRIVEWAY

Owen runs to an opening in the bushes between the driveways. He sees the Spivey boys run inside their house and the Broom approach the SUV that is parked out front.

EXT. SPIVEY DRIVEWAY

The Broom rests the branch next to the SUV. It slides its tip along the contours of the vehicle, then gives the fender a curious shove. The alarm goes off.

The Broom goes to the hood of the car and begins to beat on it with the branch. The exterior house lights turn on. The Broom takes off, leaping over the bushes where Owen hides, and hops toward the Shaw's backyard. Owen runs after him.

INT. SPIVEY HOUSE - FRONT HALL - A LITTLE LATER

Spivey stands in his bathrobe holding a phone, looking out the window at his damaged vehicle, his sons just behind him.

SPIVEY
I want somebody out here. Now!

EXT. BACK OF WIDOW'S HOUSE

Owen searches for the Broom. He sees Jack's police cruiser race out of the covered bridge and up Spivey's driveway.

EXT. SPIVEY DRIVEWAY

Jack inspects the damage to the SUV as Spivey hovers behind him. Doug Jr. and Russell stand on the front door steps.

JACK
Boy, somebody really gave it a wallop.

DOUG, JR.
We know who did it. We saw it.

SPIVEY
Don't listen to them.

JACK
What'd they see?

SPIVEY
They got some crazy story about a...

Doug, Jr and Russell approach.

RUSSELL
It was a broom.

JACK
You mean somebody used a broom to...

DOUG, JR.
No, it was this big Broom with a stick.

RUSSELL
He hit us too, down by the...

SPIVEY
O.K. That's enough of your stupid fairy tales. You boys get inside.

Doug Jr. and Russell go inside.

JACK
Boys've got some imagination.

SPIVEY
I want to know who did this. Wouldn't be surprised if it was that woman next door.

JACK
It's Halloween. Mr. Spivey, these things happen, even out here in the country. Probably just some bored teenagers.

Spivey grunts. Dissatisfied, he turns and walks to his door.

EXT. BACK OF WIDOW'S HOUSE

Owen approaches a shaft leaning against the hen house, its base hidden in the grass. He reaches out and grabs - a rake. He tosses the rake into the tall grass and it rises up again. This time it's the Broom, and it hops toward the barn.

EXT. WIDOW'S BARN

Owen stands outside the Barn, peering in through a slightly open sliding door, into the blackness.

INT. WIDOW'S BARN

The Broom stands right on the other side of the door. Owen sticks his head in, then withdraws. He puts his rope down and pushes the sliding barn door closed.

EXT. SPIVEY DRIVEWAY

Jack is about to get in his cruiser when he hears the squeaky wheels and clang of the giant barn door.

EXT. WIDOW'S BARN

Jack approaches, shines his flashlight on Owen. He freezes.

JACK
Hey, son. You live here?
(beat)
Oh, Blind Pew. Didn't recognize you without the cape.
(Owen picks up his rope)
Kinda late for doing chores, isn't it? Where's your costume? You go trick or treating?

Owen shakes his head and stares at the ground. Jack reaches into his shirt pocket and takes out a pack of gum.

JACK (cont'd)
Here you go, new pack of Juicy Fruit.

Owen takes it and gives him a hard stare.

MINNA (O.S.)
Owen!?

Jack and Owen turn to see Minna approaching, carrying a lantern. Her hair is down. She looks bewitching. A breeze off the river rustles her long bathrobe.

JACK
Evening, Ma'am.

MINNA
What's going on?

JACK
No need to be alarmed. I was checking on a disturbance next door, a little Halloween mischief. I was looking around, saw your boy...

The radio in Jack's cruiser can be heard faintly, off-screen.

JACK (cont'd)
Ah, duty calls. Well, you folks have a good night, now.

He smiles at Owen and ruffles the boy's hair.

JACK (cont'd)
See ya Pew.

He tips his hat and trots away. Minna eyes her son.

MINNA
Were you out here looking for that thing?

EXT. SHAW FARM - SUNRISE

The fading disc of a full moon is still visible. Owen, holding his rope, quietly exits the house.

EXT. WIDOW'S BARN

Owen looks with dismay at the barn door, which has a ragged six foot tall hole in it.

EXT. SHAW PROPERTY - A FIELD BY THE WOODS

Owen peers into the early-morning shadows of the forest. The Broom peeks out from behind a tree. It watches the boy, then takes an enormous leap, landing in front of him.

Owen steps toward it and extends his finger to touch the Broom. It follows his hand with the tip of its shaft, like a cobra following a snake charmer. Owen slides his rope over the shaft and cinches it tightly a foot above the bristles.

He begins to lead the Broom away. The Broom doesn't budge. Owen pulls hard, but he may as well be pulling on a fence post. He momentarily relaxes and the Broom hops towards the woods, jerking Owen off his feet.

The boy holds on and is dragged along as if he had roped a wild kangaroo.

INT. KITCHEN

Minna is frying eggs. Grandma sets the table. Lucy enters.

MINNA
Call your brother down, will you Lucy? The bus will be here soon.

LUCY
He's not up there. Probably looking for that thing. I saw him headed for the barn a little while...

Minna hurriedly exits.

EXT. SHAW FARM - FIELD BY THE WOODS

Owen, disheveled with leaves and twigs stuck in his hair, is peering into the woodland shadows, holding the empty rope.

MINNA (O.S.)
Owen!

He turns to see his mother running across the field, her apron flapping in the wind with Lucy steps behind.

The Broom peeks out from behind a tree again. It sees Minna, and peers around more eagerly. She arrives out of breath.

MINNA (cont'd)
You should not have come...

The Broom hops back into the field. Minna pushes the children along in front of her.

MINNA (cont'd)
All right, into the house, now... I'm serious. Inside!

They hurry across the field. Turning back, they see the Broom following them. They speed up and so does the Broom. By the time they reach the house they are running full speed.

INT. WIDOW'S KITCHEN

Owen, Lucy and Minna enter. Granny looks at the breathless trio.

GRANDMA
No sense hurrying now, already missed the bus.

LUCY
Granny, he's back.

They gather at the window as the Broom approaches the house.

EXT. THE WIDOW'S BACKYARD

Scattered around the back door are the remains of the oak tree. Some wood, already split, is stacked by the door. An AX is lodged in an upturned piece of wood.

The Broom surveys the scene. It wraps its shaft around the handle and yanks the ax free of the log.

INT. WIDOW'S KITCHEN

Lucy, Owen and Grandma watch the Broom. Minna returns from the living room with the fireplace poker.

MINNA
Get away from the window.

LUCY
Mom. Come here, look.

In the backyard, the Broom is splitting wood. It upends a section of a log with its shaft, then takes the ax and brings it swiftly down on the log, splitting it cleanly.

GRANDMA
Pretty handy with an ax.

Putting down the ax, the Broom stands upright and "nods" to the Shaws, then picks up the ax again and sets to work.

MINNA
Now I <u>am</u> going to call the police.

Owen grabs his mother's apron, beseechingly.

GRANDMA
Now hold on, Minna. Lets just see what happens here.

EXT. THE WOODPILE - A FEW HOURS LATER

The Broom has cut and stacked cords of wood. He places the last piece on the enormous pile, and plants the ax.

INT. WIDOW'S KITCHEN

Owen raps loudly on the glass. The Broom approaches and taps the back door. Owen goes to open it.

MINNA
Owen, stay away from that door!

Lucy is still at the window.

LUCY
Uh oh.

EXT. BACK DOOR - WOOD PILE

BLITZ approaches, growling viciously. The Broom moves away from the door. The dog backs it into a corner formed by the woodpile and the house and ATTACKS.

Owen charges outside. Minna, Lucy and Granny follow,

MINNA
Owen!

The dog has the Broom by the bristles. The Broom cannot bend its shaft close enough to its bristles to defend itself. It futilely swings at the dog, then tries to hop away, but is jerked around by the vicious animal. Owen runs to the combatants, with his mother trying to restrain him.

The dog continues its attack. The Broom, up against the wood pile, grabs the AX, swinging wildly, just missing Owen and Minna, who drop to the ground. The Broom brings the ax down sharply, into a piece of wood just behind the dog.

Blitz runs off yelping. Owen and Minna stare at the ax. Next to the blade lies a two inch section of DOG TAIL. Owen tries to go to the Broom, but Minna restrains him.

MINNA (cont'd)
It's dangerous, Owen. Keep back.

Lucy approaches.

LUCY
I think he's hurt.

MINNA
It's not a "he"...it's a thing. It can't think. It's a vicious, wild...

The Broom, with many bristles missing, moves toward them crookedly, losing more bristles. Minna draws Owen closer.

The Broom falls over and drags itself toward them, planting its shaft tip and pulling itself forward like a worm. It curves its shaft and drags the tip through the dirt, spelling out: "S O R R Y". Then it drops flat, motionless.

Granny and Lucy hesitantly approach.

GRANDMA
What is it. What's it say?

MINNA
"Sorry".

A breeze off the river scatters the bristles. The Shaws gather round the lifeless shaft.

GRANDMA
Maybe he wasn't a "thing".

MINNA
Who knows what it was.

GRANDMA
Well, that's the end of him. Too bad.

MINNA
You're the one who said it was a witch's broom.

GRANDMA
It was... But it was magic, real magic.

LUCY
We could have used a little magic around here.

Minna goes to the ax and pulls it from the log. Lucy and Grandma stand behind her.

LUCY (cont'd)
Ew, gross! Is that what I think it is?

As the three of them contemplate the tail, they hear an unexpected sound. They turn to see Owen on his hands and knees. He is gathering bristles and muttering in a low almost inaudible voice.

LUCY (cont'd)
(whispering)
He's talking!

The three women tiptoe up behind Owen.

OWEN
(to Broom)
...going to be OK. We just have to get all these, and then we can put you...

He notices the women watching him and falls silent. Minna kneels next to him.

MINNA
Owen, were you talking to the Broom?

Owen says something too quietly for Minna to hear.

MINNA (cont'd)
What sweetheart?

OWEN
(staring at lifeless Broom)
Everything dies. We lose everything.

Minna puts her arm around Owen.

MINNA
No we don't. We don't lose everything. Lucy, help Owen get these bristles. Lets work some magic of our own.

INT. WIDOW'S KITCHEN - DUSK

Minna's hands rebraid the twine that held the bristles, most of which are back in place. The Broom lies between Minna and Granny on the kitchen table. Granny's hand rests on the shaft, Minna is puffing on her pipe. The children enter clutching a few broom bristles.

Minna, concentrates, working the bristles into the Broom.

MINNA
You know, if this works, we have to agree on something, O.K?.

LUCY
What?

MINNA
We can't tell anyone. If we don't want to lose it, it has to be our secret.

LUCY
Don't worry about me. The only thing creepier than telling people you've seen something like this is telling them that you live with it.

GRANDMA
Infernal thing like this, folks would take it away for sure and...

OWEN
(mumbles inaudibly)
And what?

The women look at Owen, so surprised to hear him speak again that they just stare.

LUCY
What'd you say?

Owen remains silent, his chin against his chest.

GRANDMA
C'mon Owen.

OWEN
(close to a whisper)
I said, what, what would folks do?

GRANDMA
Cut it up. See what's inside. Nobody believes in magic anymore.

OWEN
(mumbles)
I do.

LUCY
What?

OWEN
I do.

LUCY
Do what?

Stubborn silence from Owen.

LUCY (cont'd)
Do what?

OWEN
Believe in magic...

Granny jerks her hand away from the Broom.

GRANDMA
He moved! I felt something.

They all gather close around the Broom but there is no further sign of life.

MINNA
There are still some bristles missing. Granny, check over by the garden.

Granny takes a lantern and exits with Owen and Lucy. The door latch doesn't catch. It swings open. As Minna rises to close it, the Broom moves. She tries to get it to stand.

MINNA (cont'd)
Come on, you can do it.

It falls over. As Minna bends to pick it up, her pipe clenched between her teeth, Jack leans in through the open back door and knocks on the door frame.

JACK
Hello.

MINNA
(turns, startled)
Oh, hello. You surprised me.

Jack steps in. He is in his "civvies" - khaki pants, wind breaker, plaid shirt and baseball cap.

JACK
(shyly, tongue tied)
I saw the lights on and...I was looking for some more of that apple butter out front. Didn't see any, so...

Minna self-consciously places her pipe on the table. The Broom's shaft lifts slightly off the floor, unseen by Jack, grazing the back of Minna's ankle.

MINNA
Ohhhh. Oh, sure. Got some right here.

Minna goes to the pantry and lifts a box.

JACK
Let me help you.

Jack takes the box and sets it on the counter.

MINNA
One?

JACK
How about three. Uh...Minna...

She is distracted, trying to keep an eye on the Broom, lying motionless just behind Jack.

MINNA
You must eat a lot of toast.

JACK
Sure do, when I've got something as tasty as this to put on it.

Minna takes the three jars from the box and puts them in a bag. Behind Jack, she watches the Broom pulling itself across the floor to a chair.

JACK (cont'd)
You know, I was wondering if...

Jack reaches for his wallet and tries to act casual. The Broom pulls itself up using the chair, then leans against the refrigerator. Its drooping shaft pulls up straight.

JACK (cont'd)
...you might like to... sometime...grab a bite or...?

The Broom is wobbling toward Jack like a tipsy drunk.

MINNA
You mean dinner?

Minna steps around Jack, picks up the Broom, and sets it by the refrigerator.

JACK
Well yeah. Just an idea, but...

MINNA
How about tonight?

JACK
Tonight? Gee, sure, I guess...

Minna goes to the back door and grabs a sweater off a hook.

MINNA
Ready?

JACK
Uh, okay, sure.

He picks up his apple butter, lifts the box as well.

JACK (cont'd)
Want this out front? You're all out.

EXT. BACK OF WIDOW'S

Jack stands at the edge of the garden as Minna goes to Granny, who holds a lantern, while Lucy and Owen kneel. He observes an excited outburst on the part of Owen, who shoots a look towards Jack and quietly but quickly walks to the house followed by Granny and Lucy.

EXT. WIDOW'S DRIVEWAY - VEGETABLE STAND

Minna and Jack walk toward Jack's pick-up truck, stopping at the vegetable stand. Minna takes the jars out of the box Jack holds and restocks the shelf.

JACK
Looks like you sell a lot of this.

MINNA
My claim to fame.

Jack helps Minna into his truck. As they drive away, the Spivey boys sneak out of the shadows.

RUSSELL
Got it?

Doug, Jr. hands him the MOUSE-CONTAMINATED JAR.

DOUG, JR.
Dad said put it somewhere in the middle.

INT. WIDOW'S KITCHEN

Grandma and the kids look closely at the Broom's shaft.

GRANDMA
Dog fight used up what was left of him.

OWEN
He's just sleeping.

Owen goes to a kitchen cabinet, takes two large pan lids out of the cabinet, goes to the Broom and, CLANG! He slams the lids together. The Broom straightens and stiffens, spinning like a top. Then it takes off like a rocket, right into the ceiling. He's stuck, his bristle-end flailing about wildly.

EXT. PARKING LOT - ROADSIDE TAVERN

Jack's truck pulls into the parking lot of a cozy tavern. He jumps out and opens the passenger-side door.

JACK
I hope this is okay.

MINNA
It's fine. We...I used to come here a lot.

JACK
You sure? We could go someplace else.

MINNA
No. A bowl of chili would be good. They used to have really great chili here.

JACK
Still do.

INT. TAVERN

Jack and Minna slide into a booth. The wood-cutters are at a pool table, wedged into an alcove near the front door.

DARYL
Hey, look over there. I don't believe what I'm seeing.

Wayne whacks a ball into a pocket and looks up.

WAYNE
Is that the Widow Shaw?

CHUCK
Yeah, with Jack. Musta' put her under arrest, to get her out of that house.

DARRYL
You know, I shoulda asked her out myself.

WAYNE
Yeah, when she had the headlock on you. That was the perfect opportunity.

Their laughter catches Minna's attention and when she looks at them, DARRYL thumbs his nose and shadow boxes. There is more laughter from the wood-cutters and Minna looks away. An inebriated Chuck approaches the booth.

CHUCK
Hiya, Minna. Hey, Darryl over there says he wants to go a few more rounds with you. I think he kinda liked it when you wrapped your arm around his neck...

Chuck models a head-lock.

JACK
Why don't you go back to your game?

CHUCK
...squeezed him up against your...

JACK
I said, go back to your game, Chuck.

The commanding authority in Jack's voice gets Chuck's attention. He retreats.

INT. WIDOW'S KITCHEN

Grandma is on a chair trying to get a hold of the Broom's bristles which continue to flail around.

INT. OWEN'S BEDROOM

The children try to get a hold of the wiggling shaft that sticks up through the floor.

LUCY
Why doesn't he stop doing that?

OWEN
He's scared, 'Cause he thinks he's trapped, like in that tree.

Owen grabs a pillow and wraps it around the Broom.

LUCY
Owen, be careful.

Lying down, Owen holds tightly onto the pillow-wrapped shaft and is jerked around the floor.

OWEN
It's okay. It's okay.

Slowly the Broom stops its wild gyrations.

EXT. SPIVEY BACK YARD

The Spivey boys, distressed, kneel by their dog as Doug Spivey inspects the animal's tail.

SPIVEY
No, Russell, that is definitely not an animal bite.

He rises and looks malevolently towards the Shaw house.

SPIVEY (cont'd)
Boys, it appears the enemy has returned fire. Take Blitz inside.

INT. TAVERN

Jack is working hard at making a good impression. Minna is working hard at remembering how to make casual conversation.

MINNA
When did you get out?

JACK
Last summer.

MINNA
Did you like the army?

JACK
Some people think if a person likes rules and regulations there's something wrong with them. Didn't bother me. I liked the feeling of having things all lined up, something to do from sun up to sun down. It agreed with me.
(beat)
Loved the jumping, too.

Minna looks at him questioningly.

JACK (cont'd)
I was a paratrooper.

MINNA
Really? What was that like?

JACK
You know, the only hard part is taking that leap. Once you're out of the plane...Well, it sounds corny but, you're up there in the sky free as a bird. It's like nothing else.

MINNA
My husband used to say the same thing.

JACK
Oh yeah?

MINNA
He flew fisherman and hunters into the woods up north. We had our own plane. Kept it right on the river by the house.

JACK
You fly?

MINNA
Oh no. Not me. I never got it really. Whenever I was up there, I always thought about...falling.

JACK
Well it's not the same for everybody.

MINNA
I know. Owen loved going up with his dad every chance he had. They couldn't wait until he was old enough to...what'd they call it...take the stick?

JACK
Well, I know how it feels. I loved being up there.

MINNA
Even without a plane.

Jack laughs

MINNA (cont'd)
Why'd you leave?

JACK
Reverend Peters wrote me about the county looking for new troopers. Sounded good.

MINNA
How do you know Reverend Peters?

JACK
He was my Sunday School teacher. I grew up here, went to Wicket High.

The waitress, PAULA, approaches with their food. She is a large matronly type in her late forties.

PAULA
Two chili's.

JACK
Thanks, Paula.

Paula serves the order.

PAULA
So how those kids now? Lucy and...

MINNA
Owen. Fine, they're fine.

PAULA
Well, it's sure good to see you in here. Don't wait so long next time.
(to Jack)
You bring her back, soon, you hear? That's an order.

JACK
Yes, Ma'am.

Paula laughs, pats Jack on the back and leaves.

MINNA
You went to Wicket High? I don't remember you.

JACK
Oh, I remember you. Homecoming Queen, class of... 1984. You drove by in this red convertible, sitting on the back wearing a crown. I remember, I asked my dad, "Is she a real queen?"

MINNA
A real queen?

JACK
Yeah, like from a fairy tale.
(seeing Minna's puzzled look)
Well, I was only six.

Minna lowers her head and chuckles quietly

JACK (cont'd)
What?

MINNA
I was just picturing myself sitting on that car, grinning like an idiot, people clapping and cheering.
(beat)
I doubt anybody'd mistake me for a real queen these days.

JACK
You could fool me.

INT. WIDOW'S LIVING ROOM

Plaster fragments are being swept into a dust pan. We pull back we see the Broom sweeping as Owen holds the dust pan. Lucy watches. Granny gazes up at the hole in the ceiling.

GRANDMA
He's got some spunk, alright. I think he's going to be just fine.
(taking the dust pan from Owen)
You kids better get ready for bed.

INT. WIDOW'S LIVING ROOM

Lucy and Owen in pajamas go upstairs. Granny tends the fire. The Broom lays on the sofa with its "head" on a tiny pillow.

OWEN
(to the Broom)
Good night.

The Broom nods, then its head sinks into the pillow.

INT. WIDOW'S UPSTAIR'S HALL

Owen and Lucy stop at their mother's empty room and look in.

LUCY
Isn't it amazing?

OWEN
Sure is. I wonder what else he can do?

LUCY
Not the Broom, Owen. Mom. She's gone, out. Like a regular person.

Owen looks at his mother's empty room and slowly nods.

OWEN
Yeah. That is amazing.

LUCY
I remember when Mom and Dad used to go out. Sometimes when they came home they turned the radio on really quiet. They didn't know I was awake. I would sneak down and watch them dance.

They proceed to their rooms, Lucy continues.

LUCY (cont'd)
Once Daddy saw me, I thought he was going to be mad. He called me down from the stairs, then he and Mom just picked me up and we all danced together.

INT. TAVERN - MINNA'S AND JACK'S TABLE

Minna takes the last gulp from a mug of beer, smiling.

MINNA
No, I can't. Really, I don't remember,

JACK
Sure you do. We sang it every game.

Jack hums a march. He does it slowly, and it has a slightly plaintive sound. Minna, hesitantly joins in singing.

MINNA
"Cause we are the Wicket Warriors... Champions of the...

Jack stops humming and joins in.

JACK AND MINNA
...The hard wood floors... Champions of the great outdoors... On the field or in the gym... Wicket's Warriors always win. Hail, hail, the valiant Warriors, Victory is our name".

They finish the song. Minna looks down, laughing ruefully.

MINNA
God, what a ridiculous song.

Paula approaches.

PAULA
You folks want dessert?

EXT. BETWEEN SHAW AND SPIVEY PROPERTY

Spivey pushes through the vegetation separating the properties and heads toward the Shaw's barn.

EXT. WIDOW'S BARN

Spivey climbs aboard the widow's tractor, aimed downhill toward the river. He wrestles with the shift lever, then dismounts, picks up a rock, and starts bangs on the lever.

INT. WIDOW'S LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN

Grandma is asleep. Owen tiptoes in with a blanket and makes a bed next to the sofa. The sound of clanging metal comes from outside. The Broom lifts its head and looks around. Another clang and it rises.

OWEN
You heard that, too?

Owen and the broom go to the back door.

EXT. WIDOW'S BARN

Spivey continues to beat on the tractor. On the other side of the barn, Owen and the Broom peek around, watching him.

The Broom hops out, but Owen holds back, frightened by the hulking, agitated Spivey. The Broom sneaks up and taps Spivey on the shoulder. Spivey turns.

The Broom balances stiffly, upright. Spivey is puzzled. He pokes it with a finger and it falls over. He picks it up, looks at it closely, and tosses it into the brush. He turns back to the tractor.

The Broom sneaks up and taps him on the shoulder again. Spivey spins around, but now the Broom is lying low in the tall grass. Spivey spots Owen at the corner of the barn.

SPIVEY
What are you doing there?

Owen steps out, bravely.

OWEN
What are you doing?

Spivey approaches the boy, menacingly.

SPIVEY
You want to know what I'm doing? I'll tell you what I'm doing.

He moves closer to Owen.

SPIVEY (cont'd)
(repressed rage)
I'm looking for my dog's tail.

He moves still closer. Owen stands his ground. Spivey grabs the boy's shoulder and puts his face close to Owen's.

SPIVEY (cont'd)
(indicates with his fingers)
About this long. Seen it around?

Behind Spivey, the Broom sets up, taking a few practice swings like a baseball batter. Then he lets loose, whacking Spivey so hard across the buttocks he lunges forward.

Spivey howls and twists around. The Broom drums him on the forehead, like a Three Stooges routine. Spivey covers himself and runs off.

EXT. TAVERN PARKING LOT - JACK'S TRUCK

Jack holds the door open for Minna.

PAULA (O.S.)
Jack! Jack!

Jack looks toward the restaurant door where Paula stands holding his hat. Jacks's hands go to his head,

JACK
Oops. Be right back.

He goes to Paula, who gives him his hat.

PAULA
Gotta' sew this thing to your head.

JACK
Guess so.

PAULA
You know, she's had kind of a rough time the last few years.

JACK
Yeah, I heard.

PAULA
Okay. I just...

JACK
What?

PAULA
A woman like her might need a little extra...ah..understanding.

Jack smiles good-naturedly.

JACK
I can do that.

EXT. WIDOW'S DRIVEWAY - FRONT OF HOUSE

Jack's pick-up truck pulls in. Jack goes around and opens Minna's door. They walk to the arbor gate.

JACK
C'mon. Everybody goes to the Harvest Dance. We wouldn't even have to dance.

MINNA
Why not?

Jack is caught a little off balance.

JACK
Well, I mean, we could if you wanted, I'm just not very good at it.

MINNA
(smiling)
Listen Jack, that's not the kind of thing you tell a woman you're trying to get to a dance.

Jack laughs at himself as they proceed up the porch steps.

MINNA (cont'd)
Well, thank you for dinner.

JACK
Thanks for coming. If you'd like to go back there sometime, just give me a call.

MINNA
Oh, I will. 911. Woman needs chili.

JACK
Seriously, anytime. You and the kids, your Grandma, too.

MINNA
(extending her hand)
That's nice, Jack, but we don't go out much.

They shake hands. Minna steps on to the porch. Jack looks up and leans against the wobbly bannister.

JACK
You know you really ought to...

The bannister gives way and he tumbles backward, dropping four feet down and out of sight into the giant rhododendron beside the stairs. Minna spins around.

MINNA
Jack?!

Jack crawls out from the giant rhododendron.

JACK
I'm fine. I'm fine.

A branch is stuck in the collar of his jacket. The leaves stick out from the sides of his head, creating the appearance of enormous ears. Minna covers her mouth to stifle laughter.

MINNA
I'm sorry.

He removes the branch and leans over to dust himself off.

JACK
I've heard of falling hard for a girl before, but jeez...

He stands and gives Minna a smile. It's clear she is charmed. She sees Jack's hat on the ground and picks it up.

JACK (cont'd)
If you think falling off a porch is funny, you don't want to miss seeing me on the dance floor.

MINNA
All right, Officer Wilkie. Tomorrow. Seven o'clock, home by nine.

Minna puts the hat on his head and kisses him on the cheek.

INT. WIDOW'S LIVING ROOM

Minna enters and awakens sleeping Grandma.

GRANDMA
Must have dozed off.

Granny gets up and pokes around the sofa. It's empty. She looks around the room.

GRANDMA (cont'd)
Must be around here somewhere.

MINNA
What?

GRANDMA
That Broom!

MINNA
Oh my God. I completely forgot!

EXT. WIDOW'S DRIVEWAY

Jack is backing out of the driveway when a crazed looking Spivey stumbles out of the shadows. His head is bandaged and he carries a chainsaw. Jack stops and gets out of his truck.

JACK
Mr. Spivey, are you alright?

SPIVEY
It's here. I saw it. It attacked me.

JACK
What are you talking about?

SPIVEY
The Broom, you fool. My boys were telling the truth. There's a broom around here. A witch's Broom...
(motions to the widow's house)
And it belongs to that woman.

JACK
I know you and Mrs. Shaw have some problems with each other, but spreading crazy rumors isn't going to help the situation. We aren't a bunch of superstitious hillbillies around here.

SPIVEY
Oh yeah? I've heard those stories about the lightning rod on the church.

JACK
That's all they are, Mr. Spivey, stories.

SPIVEY
What if they're not? What if some of those witches settled down here? Ever think about that?

JACK
Get a grip on yourself, man.

SPIVEY
Listen to me. I saw the thing. Up by the barn. C'mon, I'll show you.

INT. OWEN'S BEDROOM

Owen is asleep. The Broom is next to him, its "head" also on the pillow. Granny and Minna stand by the bed.

GRANDMA
Look at him. Happy as a cat in a creamery.

Minna kisses her son's forehead, and nods towards the Broom.

MINNA
I don't think he should be sleeping with it.

Granny nods in agreement. She shifts the covers and lifts the Broom. It drapes across her hands like a wet noodle.

GRANDMA
Asleep.

SHAW'S LIVING ROOM

Granny and Minna complete tucking in the Broom

GRANDMA
Where'd you and the young man go?

MINNA
Over to the roadhouse.

GRANDMA
Well, how'd it feel, being out and all.

Minna shrugs her shoulders, but the smile on her face tells Grandma what she wants to know. Grandma nudges her with her elbow.

GRANDMA (cont'd)
Come on...

MINNA
It was OK.

GRANDMA
Just OK?

MINNA
What's wrong with OK?

EXT. WIDOW'S BARN

Spivey leads Jack through tall grass.

SPIVEY
It was right around here. I wouldn't be surprised if the thing is still...

Boing! Spivey steps on an old rake and it hits him on the face. He leaps back and pulls on the chain saw cord. Jack picks up the rake, and hands it to Spivey.

JACK
Well, here is your witch's broom.

He turns and walks back towards his truck, chuckling.

SPIVEY
(calling after him)
Wait a minute. This isn't it. It was a broom. A real witch's broom.

EXT. WIDOW'S HOUSE - THE NEXT DAY

It is early morning.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Owen tiptoes down the stairs.

OWEN
Broom? Broom?

He goes to the sofa and pulls back the covers - empty.

OWEN (cont'd)
Broom!?

INT. WIDOW'S KITCHEN

Owen runs in. The back door is open.

EXT. VEGETABLE GARDEN

The Broom pokes around the garden. Owen approaches.

OWEN
What're you doing out here?

The Broom hops over to the pumpkin patch and bends over, giving the remaining runt pumpkin a nudge.

OWEN (cont'd)
Yeah?

The Broom spells out in the dirt: "FIX IT. I WILL"

OWEN (cont'd)
"Fix it. I will"? What do you mean?

The Broom picks up a bucket and hops off toward the woods.

OWEN (cont'd)
Wait for me.

EXT. WOODS - BEHIND WIDOW'S HOUSE

The Broom's shaft knocks a piece of fungus off a tree.

OWEN
This, too?

The Broom nods. Owen tosses it into the bucket that he now holds, filled with other fungi and berries.

EXT. WOODS BY RIVER'S EDGE WHERE IT WIDENS INTO A LAKE

The Broom moves slowly through the vegetation by the river, with its head to the ground like a hound on the scent, plowing through fallen leaves and sandy dirt. He stops, evidently tugging on something with great effort. At last, his tip comes arching up, grasping a strange looking mud covered tuber. Owen looks at it as it lands in the bucket.

OWEN
Ick.

The loud call of ducks fills the air as a flock takes off from the lake. The Broom looks up. Owen stands beside, looking at the ducks, the Broom, the ducks, the Broom.

OWEN (cont'd)
Holy smoke! You can fly can't you?

The Broom turns to Owen, then bends over and writes in the sandy dirt "NO FLY, FLY BAD". He underlines it, then heads back into the woods. Owen chases after him.

OWEN (cont'd)
What do you mean, "Fly bad?"

EXT. EDGE OF WOODS - BEHIND WIDOW'S FARM

The Broom emerges, Owen carries the bucket a step behind.

OWEN
...couldn't just forget. I mean brooms are made to fly, right? I bet if you just got up in the air, it'd come back.

The Broom ignores Owen and continues to hop forward.

OWEN (cont'd)
We ought to try, don't you think? We wouldn't have to tell anybody or...

INT. SPIVEY LIVING ROOM

Spivey, in his pajamas, is at the windows with his wife.

JEAN
Doug, you stepped on a rake. Why can't you just...

SPIVEY
(angry, frustrated)
I told you. I did not step on a rake. I know what I saw.
(squinting out window)
Where'd we put those binoculars?

EXT. WIDOW'S BARN

The FUNGUS FILLED BUCKET rests beside the open door.

INT. WIDOW'S BARN HAY LOFT

Owen stands by the open loft door, which looks out to the river. The barn is built on a sloping hill and consequently the loft is high off the ground. The Broom holds back.

OWEN
(pleading, the way only an eight year old can)
Pul-leeze. Just once. That's all. Just once. I won't ask again, I promise, Just try. I know you can do it.

The Broom shuffles forward and looks down. He shuffles back into the shadows and drops his head. Owen goes to him.

OWEN (cont'd)
C'mon, we can do it. Once we're out there it's going to be great.

The Broom looks at the door then at Owen. He shuffles forward, his shaft trembling. Owen takes a hold of him.

OWEN (cont'd)
Okay. Ready? Here goes.

Owen charges across the loft floor and leaps out the door with the Broom. We hear him yell.

EXT. WIDOW'S BARN

At the base of the barn are bales of hay. Owen is sprawled across one, the Broom is stuck in another, only a foot of shaft and bristles are visible. Owen gets to his feet groaning and pulls the Broom out.

OWEN
Okay. Maybe you did forget.

The Broom stands, his shaft droops forward.

OWEN (cont'd)
Aw c'mon. That's alright. It doesn't matter. I don't care if you can fly.

He puts the Broom over his shoulder and walks back to the front of the barn.

INT. WIDOW'S BEDROOM - A LITTLE LATER

Minna sits in bed addressing her open closet.

MINNA
Don't make such a big deal about it.

Lucy emerges, holding a handful of dresses.

LUCY
Make a big deal about it! You're going to a dance. We've got to make sure...

Lucy sniffs the air.

LUCY (cont'd)
What's that smell?

INT. LIVINGROOM

Minna and Lucy ascend the stairs. Owen and the Broom are at the fireplace. A steaming iron kettle hangs from a metal arm over the fire. The Broom wears a hot pad mitten on its shaft.

MINNA
What is that?

Granny descends the stairs.

GRANDMA
Lordy, what a stink!

The Broom turns, moves his tip in friendly acknowledgement. With the mitten on, it looks like he is waving.

OWEN
We're making a potion with roots and berries and... other stuff.

The women approach the fireplace. The concoction is about to boil over. The Broom swings out the hinged arm. He flips the mitten off, plunges his shaft into the steaming brew. Sparks fly from the liquid. Bubbles rise up.

LUCY
Owen, what's he doing?

Owen shrugs his shoulders. The Broom withdraws his shaft which Owen dries off with a towel. He looks into the brew.

OWEN
Is it done?

The Broom nods: "Yes."

MINNA
It better be. You've got to get that smelly stuff out of here.

Owen tries to handle the heavy kettle by himself.

GRANDMA
Lucy, give him a hand.

Owen hands Lucy a hot pad mitten. Together they carry the potion to the back door, followed by Granny and Minna.

INT. WIDOW'S KITCHEN

The Broom is about to follow the children out.

MINNA
(to the Broom)
Wait a minute, you can't go out.

She closes the door before the Broom can exit.

EXT. VEGETABLE GARDEN

Owen and Lucy carry the potion.

INT. SPIVEY LIVING ROOM

Spivey, now dressed, stands at the window looking through binoculars. Jean is behind him.

SPIVEY
It's just those kids.

JEAN
Doug, I think you've really lost it..

SPIVEY
I don't think you appreciate what we're dealing with here, Jean. That woman cut off our dog's tail. Why? To make some spell to bring that thing to life.

JEAN
(mocking him)
Her magic Broom?

Doug Jr. and Russell, who carries a video camera, enter.

RUSSELL
Found it, dad.

SPIVEY
(to Jean)
Lost my mind, eh? You'll see. I'm going to prove it. Everyone's going to see.

EXT. WIDOW'S VEGETABLE GARDEN

Lucy and Owen crouch down beside the runt pumpkin, the iron kettle is next to them. Owen holds a laddle.

LUCY
What do you think it's supposed to do?

OWEN
"Fix it." Whatever that means.

LUCY
Maybe it needs more.

Owen looks down the driveway and spots the oak sapling.

OWEN
Let's put some on that tree.

END OF WIDOW'S DRIVE - SAPLING

Lucy and Owen empty the kettle's contents onto the sapling.

LUCY
(holding her nose)
P.U.

Grandma calls them from the back door.

GRANDMA
Owen, Lucy. Breakfast!

EXT. BACK DOOR

Owen and Lucy approach with the kettle.

GRANDMA
Don't bring that stinking thing back in here. Take it up to the barn.

INT. WIDOW'S KITCHEN

Granny enters but does not securely latch the door. The Broom sees Owen and Lucy and sneaks out, tip toeing in a sliding motion instead of his usual hop.

INT. SPIVEY LIVING ROOM

Spivey's sons are looking through binoculars as Spivey prepares the video camera, loading tape.

EXT. WIDOW'S BARN

Lucy and Owen enter the barn carrying the kettle.

INT. SPIVEY LIVING ROOM

Through the binoculars Russell sees the Broom hopping along, entering the barn.

RUSSELL
I saw it! Going in the barn!

Spivey looks out, too late. He picks up the video camera.

SPIVEY
Time to do some closer surveillance.

INT. BARN

Owen and Lucy drop the kettle next to a BUSHEL OF APPLES.

EXT. BETWEEN WIDOW'S AND SPIVEY'S

Spivey approaches furtively with his video cam.

INT. WIDOW'S KITCHEN

Grandma and Minna finish breakfast preparations. Minna looks out the window and sees Spivey sneaking toward the barn. She looks around anxiously.

MINNA
Where is the Broom?

EXT. WIDOW'S BARN

Spivey stands beside the open barn door clutching his camera and whirls around finding Owen and Lucy about to exit, carrying a bushel of apples.

SPIVEY
Where is it?!

MINNA
Where's what?

Spivey turns. Minna is behind him, holding a pitch fork.

MINNA (cont'd)
You kids go inside.

Minna watches the children walk away, the bushel basket held between them, and sees the Broom's shaft swinging from the basket's edge like a cat's tail.

SPIVEY
You know exactly what I'm looking for.

MINNA
I think you're looking for trouble, trespassing on my land.

SPIVEY
You don't scare me. What do you think people will say when they find out?

MINNA
Find out what?

SPIVEY
About you and your sick world over here. What'd you do with my dog's tail? Make some potion out of it? Eye of newt, tail of hound? I've got your number.

Minna takes a step towards Spivey and lowers the pitch fork.

MINNA
I think you better clear off my property.

INT. WIDOW'S KITCHEN

Granny watches Owen and Lucy remove apples from the basket placed on the table. Minna enters. The Broom uncoils out of the basket, hops out and sits on the edge of the table with its bristles over the edge, swinging back and forth.

MINNA
We've got problems now. He's seen our friend here.

GRANDMA
Don't suppose he wants to keep it secret.

MINNA
He's out there with a video camera.

GRANDMA
One thing's clear, we've got to make sure he doesn't see him again.

LUCY
That won't be easy. That creep could sneak over here and look in our windows.

MINNA
We might have to fix a room up in the attic. Have him stay there.

OWEN
All the time?

GRANDMA
Maybe he could go out at night some.

MINNA
That's the only way he'll be safe, Owen.

INT. ATTIC

Granny, Owen, and the Broom stand in the third floor attic, a dusty cluttered dark space under the eaves. The Broom slumped over, despondent.

OWEN
He's not going to like it up here.

GRANDMA
Can't blame him. Been stuck in a tree, who knows how long. Now he's stuck in this attic.

INT. WIDOW'S KITCHEN

Minna hangs up her apron and puts a sweater on. Lucy enters.

LUCY
Where are you going?

MINNA
Well, we don't have many chickens left to feed, or wood left to chop, but we still have apples to pick.

EXT. BACK DOOR

Minna exits. The door opens behind her. It is Lucy.

LUCY
Need some help?

INT. ATTIC

Owen and the Broom clean up. Owens discovers an old ring-toss game and plays with the Broom.

EXT. ORCHARD

Minna and Lucy pick apples together.

MINNA
...a real queen.

LUCY
What do you mean?

MINNA
Well, I was the Homecoming Queen.

LUCY
No!

MINNA
I must have told you that.

LUCY
Never. You mean with the little crown?

Minna nods

LUCY (cont'd)
And the thing...the sash thing?

Lucy is now laughing, and posing as if she is "wearing the sash thing".

MINNA
(also amused)
Yes, I had the sash thing.

INT. SPIVEY LIVING ROOM

Spivey continues his surveillance. His sons now play video games in the background. Jean enters with a plate of food.

JEAN
C'mom, Doug. You've got to eat.

INT. WIDOW'S HOUSE SECOND FLOOR LANDING

Owen plugs in a an extension cord and climbs the stairs to the attic carrying an old ELECTROLUX VACUUM, whose cord stretches out behind him.

INT. WIDOW'S ATTIC

The Broom is sweeping. Owen enters with the vacuum.

OWEN
Here, watch. You're going to love this.

The Broom hops aside as Owen starts sucking up dust with the open pipe at the end of the hose. The Broom is curious. The machine stops. Owen lifts the slack cord.

OWEN (cont'd)
Just a sec.

Owen exits. The Broom inspects the Electrolux, lowering its tip to find out where the dirt goes. Suddenly the machine comes to life and the Broom puts its tip to the mouth of the pipe. The Broom is quickly sucked up to the bristles.

INT. WIDOW'S STAIRS TO ATTIC

Owen climbs the stairs and hears a loud crash. He rushes up.

INT. ATTIC

Owen enters. The Broom is thrashing about with the vacuum cleaner stuck to its "head". Owen pulls the plug.

INT. WIDOW'S BARN

Lucy and Minna enter, pulling a wagon loaded with bushels of apples. Minna pauses at the door to look at the darkening sky.

MINNA
Looks like some bad weather blowing in.

LUCY
Mom, shouldn't you be getting ready for your big date.

MINNA
That won't take too long. I don't even have a tube of lipstick.

LUCY
Don't worry, I'll lend you some.

INT. WIDOW'S LIVING ROOM - DUSK

The Broom is lying on the sofa, its shaft draped limply over the cushion's edge. Granny stokes the fire. Minna and Lucy enter. Minna climbs the stairs.

LUCY
It's in my top drawer, Mom.

She goes to the sofa and sees the limp Broom.

LUCY (cont'd)
What's wrong with him?

GRANDMA
Bad experience in the attic.

Lucy, looking anxiously out the window toward the Spivey mansion, starts to pull the room's curtains closed. An UPRIGHT PIANO stands in the corner of the living room. As Lucy leans around it to tug on the curtain, her hand rests on the keyboard, producing a chord. The Broom looks up.

OWEN
Hey do that again.

LUCY
What?

OWEN
The piano. I think he likes it.

Lucy sits at the piano and plays. The Broom goes to her. She stops as the Broom curiously hits a couple of keys.

INT. LUCY'S BEDROOM

We see Minna in a dress for the first time. She searches Lucy's bureau drawer. Lucy enters. Piano music can be heard in the background.

LUCY
(genuinely impressed)
Gosh mom, you look great, really great.
(going to drawer)
Here, I'll find it.

Minna looks at herself in the mirror over the bureau, fussing with her hair. Lucy finds the lipstick.

MINNA
This is ridiculous. I feel as nervous as a school girl.

LUCY
Look at me.

Minna turns and purses her lips as Lucy applies the lipstick.

LUCY (cont'd)
Hmmm. A little heavy. Here.

Lucy hands Minna a white envelope from the corner of her bureau. Minna presses her lips against it, then notices it is the envelope holding the Briarcliff application.

MINNA
(regretfully)
Oh Lucy, it's your application.

Lucy takes the envelope and looks at it.

LUCY
Ah, who cares.
(tossing it aside)
Why would I want to hang out with a bunch of boring rich kids when I can live here with a Queen and a piano-playing Broom.

Minna puts her arm around Lucy's shoulder then turns, directing her attention to the music coming from downstairs.

MINNA
Is that really him playing?

INT. WIDOW'S LIVING ROOM

Minna and Lucy descend the stairs to see the Broom and Granny playing a duet. Owen watches. Granny stops and the Broom carries on solo, pounding out one note at a time with extraordinary speed, occasionally rapping rhythmically on the keyboard cover.

MINNA
He's one talented Broom.

Owen, Granny and the Broom turn to look at Minna.

LUCY
Doesn't Mom look pretty?

OWEN
Sure does.

LUCY
You think you're going to dance, Mom?

MINNA
Oh, probably not. I don't remember much about square dancing.

GRANDMA
Ah, there's nothing to it. Just do what the guy with the fiddle tells you.

Granny goes to Minna and takes her arm.

GRANDMA (cont'd)
Swing your partner round and round.

Granny starts dancing. Lucy sits and plays accompaniment.

GRANDMA (cont'd)
Step to the middle, turn around, send your partner to the next one down.

Owen claps. Granny dances with a reluctant Minna, as the Broom hops onto the piano bench, then to the floor.

He dances, his shaft swaying above the bristles that shift back and forth, suggesting moving hips. Grandma sits, exhausted. Lucy ceases playing and the broom dances briefly in silence. Tires sound outside. Minna checks the window.

MINNA
He's here. You better get him upstairs!

Owen and Lucy go the stairs. The Broom does not follow.

LUCY
C'mon.

The Broom looks from Lucy to Minna.

MINNA
Go on. You've got to go with them.

The Broom shuffles over to the children. Owen picks him up.

INT. WIDOW'S ATTIC

Lucy, Owen and the Broom enter. Lucy points to a bunch of boxes and old suitcases.

LUCY
There's an old bed under this stuff.

INT. WIDOW'S LIVING ROOM

Jack helps Minna with her coat. Granny stands nearby.

GRANDMA
Yep, we were just practicing. She's all warmed up, ready for the dance floor.

MINNA
Oh Granny.

JACK
That's good. I'm likely to make a fool of myself without a partner who knows what she's doing.

Granny puts her hand on Jack's arm.

GRANDMA
Honey, you and every other man.

INT. WIDOW'S ATTIC

Lucy and Owen clear off the bed. The Broom is at the window watching Minna and Jack get into Jack's pickup and drive off.

INT. KITCHEN

Granny reaches for the OLD BROOM over the doorway.

INT. WIDOW'S ATTIC

The Broom, still at the window, shakes its posterior rhythmically as it taps out a beat on the casement window.

The window swings open. The Broom hops up on to the window sill, takes a look back, then jumps.

EXT. WIDOW'S HOUSE

The Broom falls to the porch roof, bounces high on his bristles, does a double summersault and lands on the lawn. A strong wind blows through the surrounding trees.

INT. WIDOW'S ATTIC

Granny enters with the old broom from the kitchen.

GRANDMA
Hey kids. Look what I've got.

OWEN
What's that for?

GRANDMA
Keep him company.

LUCY
I don't think that'll help.

GRANDMA
Well, you never know. Where is he?

She lays THE OLD BROOM FROM THE KITCHEN on the BED. They scan the room and see the open window. They rush to it.

LUCY
There he is!

EXT. ROAD IN FRONT OF WIDOW'S HOUSE

The Broom hops toward the bridge. Owen, Lucy and Granny call out from the attic window. The Broom hesitates, then hops into the bridge with giant kangaroo-like leaps.

INT. ATTIC

GRANDMA
Get your coats.

EXT. WIDOW'S BACK YARD

Granny and the children race out the back door. They freeze in their tracks when they see the "runt" pumpkin, now the size of a meteorological balloon. Granny pulls the children along as leaves blow through the air.

GRANDMA
C'mon, we've got to get him. There's a storm coming.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD

The Broom takes giant leaps. He stops now and then to check the scent on the ground. We see the ROADSIDE TAVERN ahead.

EXT. WIDOW'S DRIVEWAY

Granny, Owen and Lucy pile into the car.

INT. STATION WAGON - COUNTRY ROAD

Owen, Lucy and Grandma are in the front seat together.

LUCY
I guess his potion does work.

GRANDMA
Biggest pumpkin I ever saw.

INT. TAVERN

The three wood-cutters are gathered around the pool table. Wayne is lining up a shot. DARYL chalks up his stick and surveys the deserted restaurant.

DARYL
Where is everybody?

CHUCK
Over at that church thing. You know.

WAYNE
Harvest dinner.

Wayne sinks his ball.

CHUCK
Yeah.

EXT. PARKING LOT

Sniffing Minna's scent from the previous evening, The Broom crosses the lot and looks in the tavern window.

INT. TAVERN

Wayne walks away from the table as Daryl sinks a shot.

DARYL
Hey where you going?

WAYNE
Got to take a leak.

Chuck stands looking at the table. Daryl pours the last of a pitcher into his beer glass.

DARYL
Hey Chuck, go get another pitcher.

Chuck goes to the bar. The door flies open. A gust of cold air blow in as the Broom enters.

DARYL (cont'd)
(without looking up)
It's cold out there. Shut the darn door.

The door shuts. The Broom surveys the space and goes over to the pool table. DARYL is lining up his shot when, "ploink", a ball is struck from behind him and hits another.

DARYL (cont'd)
Hey, you moron...

Daryl turns around and sees the Broom. The Broom makes a nod with its tip. Daryl looks it up and down. He extends his pool cue, but jerks back when the Broom strikes it.

The Broom lowers its shaft to the table, lines up and hits the cue ball so hard it jumps the rail and flies to the floor. He shuffles from the pool table, flips his bristles to roll the cue ball back to Daryl and leaves.

Chuck approaches with a pitcher. Daryl, sits by the pool table, glassy-eyed.

CHUCK
Hey man, where's your glass?

Daryl is unresponsive. Wayne comes up from behind.

WAYNE
What's wrong with him?

EXT. CHURCH - RECREATION HALL

The station wagon slowly cruises by the rear of the church, where a large clapboard addition, the church's recreation hall, is lit up, with cars filling the adjacent parking lot.

INT. STATION WAGON

Granny, Owen, and Lucy are scanning the streets.

GRANDMA
I think we'd better get out and look.

EXT. OPPOSITE SIDE OF CHURCH RECREATION HALL

The broom hops along the sidewalk, buffeted by the wind. Fiddle music comes from the recreation hall. The Broom stops, sniffs the ground, and hops across the grass.

Through large floor-to-ceiling windows, The Broom sees people dancing. Its posterior moves to the rhythm of the music.

Nearby, two harvest dinner attendees approach a door and enter. The Broom hops over. The door is operated with a thumb latch and the Broom is stymied. The door swings open. The Broom jumps back. Two diners exit chatting, oblivious to the Broom. The wind catches the door and before they can close it, the Broom springs inside.

INT. HALLWAY

The hallway connecting the recreation hall to the church proper is filled with coat racks. As the door closes, the Broom slides in and hides between racks.

INT. RECREATION HALL

The space is crowded. Tables line the periphery, the center is filled with dancers. It is dimly lit by candles held within the Harvest-themed centerpieces. At table, Doug and Jean Spivey hold court with some Wicket citizens.

SPIVEY
Truth is, with a fax machine, a computer and a modem, a venture capitalist like myself can run a business just as easily here as anyplace else.

CITIZEN
I guess you're the wave of the future.

SPIVEY
Once our friends from the city get a look at Wicket, they're going to come to the same conclusion Jean and I did.

REVEREND PETERS
What's that, Doug?

SPIVEY
That life out here is the way life should be. A simple life. People still working the land, helping out their neighbors...

SQUARE DANCE CALLER
Okay everybody. Grab your partners.

ANOTHER CITIZEN
(to wife)
Let's get in on this one, honey.

The others turn to the dance floor.

REVEREND PETERS
(to Spiveys)
Going to join us?

SPIVEY
I think we'll sit this one out.

Jack and Minna sit at another table watching as the dancers get ready for the upcoming dance.

JACK
Want to try?

MINNA
Sure, why not.

They rise and walk to the dance floor. Jean spies Minna.

JEAN
Check this out, Doug. Looks like your witch is going to dance.

SPIVEY
This is our chance, Jean.

JEAN
Our chance?

SPIVEY
To get a hold of that broom.

Spivey rises. On the floor, dancers take their positions facing each other in rows, Reverend Peters next to Minna.

REVEREND PETERS
...wonderful to see you, Minna. Really, just wonderful.

The music starts, and the square dance caller sings out the changes. Jack is having a hard time following the calls. Jack dances off in the wrong direction, bewildered.

Minna comes up from behind and locks arms with him. They laugh and smile at each other as they spin around.

JACK
I think you've done this before.

MINNA
It's coming back to me.

He releases her and she goes from arm to arm. As she passes from one partner to the next, they greet her warmly and return her smile.

Reaching the end of the row, Minna makes a turn and finds herself face to face with a strange figure in a long balmacaan overcoat, a scarf, and fedora.

It is the Broom, concealed within the coat, which it holds by the hanger, the hat balanced on its tip. He shifts back and forth in time to the music. Minna looks around anxiously, takes one of his sleeves and leads him away.

INT. HALLWAY - COAT RACKS

The Spiveys, in between coat racks, search for Doug's coat.

SPIVEY
It's got to be here somewhere.

JEAN
Calm down, calm down. We'll find it.

The recreation hall door swings opens. They see Minna enter with the Broom and the Spiveys step out from the coat racks.

JEAN
What on earth? That's your coat.

Spivey approaches.

SPIVEY
What's going on?

He looks down at the Broom's bristles.

SPIVEY (cont'd)
That's the thing, the Broom.

Spivey reaches for the Broom's hat.

MINNA
Don't touch him.

Spivey ignores her and removes the hat. The Broom's tip which was bent over to hold onto the hat, straightens out.

SPIVEY
Aha, there it is!

He pulls the coat off. It drops to the floor. The Broom lets go of the hanger and hops over the coat. It takes a step toward Spivey and pokes him in the chest. Jean steps back.

JEAN
D...D....Doug.

Minna takes a hold of the Broom, restraining it.

SPIVEY
I knew it. Let me see that thing.

MINNA
This thing is none of your business.

Minna tries to walk around Spivey.

SPIVEY
None of my business? I think it's everybody's business. I think everyone will want to know there's a witch living here in Wicket.

Spivey reaches for it and Minna places the Broom behind her. Spivey pushes her aside.

The Broom is motionless. Spivey steps toward it and the Broom's shaft drops forward at the bristles. The limp shaft rests on the floor. Spivey, puzzled, looks back at Minna.

SPIVEY (cont'd)
What's wrong with it?

He steps forward again, straddling the Broom's shaft. It lifts sharply, striking Spivey in the groin. He doubles over in pain. Minna grabs the Broom and runs out.

EXT. CHURCH RECREATION HALL

Minna pushes through a thick hedge and runs off. Spivey exits hunched over. Jean stands at the open door.

JEAN
Doug, be careful!

In the parking lot, he sees Owen, peeking around cars.

OWEN
Here Broom, here Broom.

Owen rounds a car and finds himself gazing at a pair of feet. He looks up slowly to see Spivey.

SPIVEY
Where is it?

Owen is silent.

SPIVEY (cont'd)
Listen kid, the cat's out of the bag. I'm going to find that thing and when I do the whole town's gonna know - your mom's a witch.

OWEN
She is not.

SPIVEY
Sure kid. Sure. She's not a witch, she just goes around with a witch's Broom.

OWEN
It's not hers. We found it. In a tree.

SPIVEY
Tree?

OWEN
The one you cut down. It was caught in a branch.

The Shaw's station wagon pulls into the parking lot. Lucy sticks her head out the window.

LUCY
Owen.

Owen goes to the car. We hear indistinctly, in the wind:

LUCY (cont'd)
Grandma thinks he probably went home.

Owen gets in the car and they drive off.

INT. RECREATION HALL

Jack is dancing and releases his partner.

SQUARE DANCE CALLER
Now, fellas, back to your partner and take her arm, swing that pretty lady round and round.

The other dancers rejoin their partners. Jack scans the room for Minna. He returns to their table, still looking, and through the window sees her in the parking lot.

EXT. CHURCH PARKING LOT

Minna puts the Broom down in the back of Jack's truck and pulls a tarp over it.

MINNA
Stay there and don't move.

She turns to see Jack approaching.

JACK
You OK?

MINNA
Just needed a little air.

JACK
(observing wind)
Plenty of it out here tonight. You want to go? I'll get our coats.

INT. SPIVEY SUV

Spivey is talking animatedly to his wife.

SPIVEY
...worth a fortune. Like having a Martian, for cripes sake.

JEAN
But Doug, that thing is so...so unnatural.

SPIVEY
Unnaturally valuable is what it is. And know what else, sweetheart? It came out of our tree. The one I cut down.

Jean looks at her husband, uncomprehending.

SPIVEY (cont'd)
It's ours, Jean. Our tree, our Broom.

EXT. JACK'S TRUCK - CHURCH PARKING LOT

Jack reverses out of the parking space. The Broom stands up uncertainly, causing the tarp to billow up. The truck goes forward and the Broom falls back down.

EXT. TAVERN

Spivey pulls his vehicle into the parking spot.

INT. TAVERN

The wood-cutters shoot pool. Spivey goes to them.

SPIVEY
Just the gentlemen I've been looking for.

EXT. ROAD BY TAVERN

Jack's truck approaches the tavern. The tarp billows up again as the Broom attempts to regain his footing. The force of the wind slides him to the back of the truck bed.

As Jack's truck passes, Spivey exits with the wood cutters.

DARYL
I know what you're talking about, man. I saw it. It was in here playing pool.

He punches Wayne in the arm.

DARYL (cont'd)
See? I told you I wasn't crazy.

WAYNE
I still don't believe it.

SPIVEY
You will. You will.

He opens his wallet and hands the wood-cutters a wad of cash.

SPIVEY (cont'd)
You'll get the rest when the job's done.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD INTERSECTION

Jack's truck stops. The Broom rises, shedding the tarp. The truck pulls away and the Broom flips out the back.

INT. TRUCK

Minna's happiness on the dance floor has left an afterglow. Transformed, she touches Jack's shoulder.

MINNA
No really, I thought you were fine.

Jack gives her a sheepish look.

MINNA (cont'd)
OK, maybe not fine, but you never stepped on my feet.

JACK
Well, I'm pretty sure I stepped on some....what in God's name is that?

In the headlights Jack and Minna see the Broom hopping along the side of the road, pacing the truck, like an unmanned pogo stick pumping away furiously. Minna draws a sharp breath.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD

The truck screeches to a halt. The Broom stops ahead and looks back at the headlights. Jack gets out.

JACK
Do you see that?

The Broom hops off the road into the underbrush. Jack leans into the truck.

MINNA
See what? I didn't see anything.

JACK
Looked like a...some kinda'...

Jack fishes out a flashlight from the glove compartment. He pushes through the underbrush and into the woods, tracking the Broom. Minna gets out and goes to the edge of the road. The Broom's shaft lifts out of the tall grass directly in front of her.

MINNA
What are you doing? I told you to stay put. You don't know what kind of...

She tries to grab the Broom but he hops about playfully.

MINNA (cont'd)
Stop it!

Jack turns and sees Minna holding the Broom and whispering to it. He approaches. Minna conceals the Broom behind her.

JACK
That's the thing I saw. That Broom!

He tries to step around Minna. She turns and steps back.

JACK (cont'd)
Let me see it.

MINNA
It's just a broom, Jack.

JACK
I heard you talking to it.

He moves toward Minna as she moves back.

JACK (cont'd)
Minna, let me see it.

Minna continues to back up. Jack reaches for the shaft over her shoulder. Minna jerks back, away from him, and stumbles. She falls to the ground, seated on top of the Broom, with her hands wrapped tightly around the shaft.

JACK (cont'd)
Minna, let me see that thing!

Jack reaches for the bristles but the Broom and Minna slide forward, just out of his reach. Minna looks down, alarmed.

JACK (cont'd)
What the...

Jack takes another step, arms outstretched, but as he moves along, the Broom rises and travels forward, outpacing him. Jack breaks into a run. The Broom lifts higher with Minna astride. She grips the shaft tightly and closes her eyes.

MINNA
Noooooooo!

Minna tries to keep her balance as the Broom rises and falls.

MINNA (cont'd)
Put me down! Do you hear me?

The Broom climbs instead, plunging through branches of hemlocks that line the road. Clouds race past the full harvest moon floating just above them.

Jack sees Minna, silhouetted against the yellow disk sail away, with her coat and long hair blowing.

With a blank expression and robot-like movements, Jack climbs into his truck. He makes a slow U-turn as Spivey's SUV and the wood-cutters' truck pass in the opposite direction.

EXT. HAY FIELD - HAY GATHERED INTO TALL STACKS

The Broom and Minna descend erratically, tossed about by the wind. Minna holds on for dear life as they plow through the top of one tall pile of hay and land roughly against another. Minna picks herself up. The Broom stands.

MINNA (cont'd)
You could have killed me! What was going through your head...or through your... your...through your...

The Broom hangs his shaft remorsefully.

MINNA (cont'd)
Never do that again, do you understand?

The Broom nods and follows Minna as she sets out across the hay field.

EXT. COVERED BRIDGE, BY THE WIDOW'S HOUSE

Minna and the Broom emerge from the covered bridge.

MINNA
... even more trouble for us. I can't picture Officer Wilkie not making a big deal about you. If he and Spivey start talking with each other, there's going to be no place to hide.

INT. SPIVEY LIVING ROOM

Spivey and Jean, at the window, spot Minna and the Broom. The wood-cutters are in the background, watching TV.

SPIVEY
There she is. She's got it with her.
(to the Wood Cutters)
Okay boys, time to go to work.

INT. WIDOW'S LIVING ROOM

The Broom and Minna enter. Grandma sleeps in a chair. Owen and Lucy are asleep on the sofa. The Broom goes to Owen and taps his shoulder. Owen awakes.

OWEN
You came back!

He gets to his feet and hugs the Broom which, given its size, is like hugging himself. The Broom reciprocates and its shaft encircles the boy's shoulders.

Lucy and Grandma awaken and go to the Broom. Grandma looks at Minna, disheveled with straw stuck to her clothes.

GRANDMA
What happened to you?

MINNA
I've had kind of a wild night. You'll never guess what our friend here...

There is a loud knock at the door.

EXT. WIDOW'S FRONT PORCH - ENTRY HALL

Spivey stands at the door with Daryl, Chuck and Wayne who hold CHAINS, a BLANKET, and a SIX FOOT LENGTH OF PIPE.

SPIVEY
...then we'll take it back to the garage. It's pretty strong, so watch...

Minna opens the door.

MINNA
What do you want?

SPIVEY
You've got something that belongs to me.

Spivey pushes his way in followed by the Wood Cutters.

MINNA
What do you think you're doing?

The Broom peeks out of the living room.

SPIVEY
There he is, get him!

Through the window and open door, we catch intermittent glimpses of the wood-cutters wrestling with the Broom, hear Owen and Lucy shrieking, the sound of breaking furniture.

INT. WIDOW'S FRONT HALL

The wood-cutters hold onto a writhing bundled form, chained to the pipe. Spivey is behind them as they move to the door.

OWEN
Mom. Stop them!

MINNA
You can't do this.

SPIVEY
Sure I can. It's mine. The tree was mine, the Broom is mine. All mine.

INT. SPIVEY GARAGE

The large garage is unevenly lit, with corners in shadow. Jean Spivey and her sons watch as the electric door rises. Spivey and the Wood Cutters enter and drop the chained and bundled Broom on the floor. Doug Jr and Russell approach.

SPIVEY
Stand back! Russ, get the video camera.

EXT. WIDOW'S DRIVEWAY

Minna goes to her car, followed by Granny, Owen and Lucy. She opens the door and turns to her family.

MINNA
I'm not sure this will do any good.

GRANDMA
You just march in there. He's a policeman. It's his duty.

MINNA
He wouldn't even come to the phone.

GRANNY
He's not going to refuse you.

Minna gets in the car and leaves. Grandma leads Owen and Lucy to the door but Owen stops, staring at the Spivey house.

GRANDMA
Come on, honey. It's gonna rain soon.

Owen sits on an upturned log by the wood pile, heartbroken.

INT. TAVERN

The tavern is deserted except for Jack, who sits in a booth near the bar, nursing a drink. WALTER, the Bartender, wipes the bar as Paula fills salt shakers.

WALTER
Yeah, I used to have a girlfriend like that. Had six cats, all of them black. Claimed she could tell people's fortunes using these weird cards.

JACK
No, that's not what I mean. I'm talking about a witch, a real...

PAULA
Geez, Jack, I'd expect that from most of the jerks that hang out around here. Let a woman act a little different, men start calling them names.

INT. SPIVEY GARAGE - DRIVEWAY

The three wood-cutters each hold a rope tied to the Broom's shaft just above the bristles. The Broom hops and lunges, swinging its shaft wildly, jerking the Wood-Cutters around.

Doug, Jr. holds back Blitz. Russell videotapes and Jean ~~trembles in the corner as Spivey watches.~~

When the Broom's tip catches the garage wall it rips a jagged hole in the drywall. It scrapes the wall again, scattering the garden tools hung there. It finally stops, its shaft rising and falling rhythmically as it "catches its breath".

DARYL
This thing ain't going to be doing any tricks for you.

Russell, working the videocam, steps too close. The Broom lunges and, with a swing, blasts the camera from the boy's hands. It shatters against the wall.

JEAN
For pity's sake, Doug, Let it go.

SPIVEY
You crazy? And have it living next door? We just need to teach it some manners.

He looks at the floor and picks up a large BRANCH PRUNER, opening and closing them. The Broom straightens out.

WAYNE
Looks like you got his attention.

SPIVEY
One of you help me here.

Daryl ties off his rope to a support column. He and Spivey move in on the Broom and it begins to spin.

SPIVEY (cont'd)
Hold him tight.

Chuck and Wayne pull hard on their ropes as the Broom spins faster and faster. Spivey holds back, watching smoke come from where the Broom is held by the ropes. Suddenly, POP! Wayne and Chuck fall backward as the burned ropes break away.

SPIVEY (cont'd)
C'mon! Get up, get him!

A single rope now holds the Broom. The Broom spins, pulling hard against it. POP! The Broom is free and spins across the garage like a wild top.

EXT. SPIVEY DRIVEWAY

The Broom blasts through the garage door, slams into Spivey's SUV and falls to the ground.

~~Blitz runs out of the hole in the garage door. As the dizzy~~ and wobbly Broom gets up, the dog latches onto the shaft.

The Spiveys and Wood Cutters come rushing out.

DOUG, JR.
Sic 'em, Blitz!

The wood-cutters, holding pruners and axes, close in.

SPIVEY
Let the dog take care of him.

The Broom snaps his shaft around violently but the dog continues to hold on. The Broom winds up a couple of turns, like an Olympic hammer thrower, and slowly lifts the dog into the air.

The Broom gives a final spin and snaps his shaft, sending the dog flying high into the sky.

EXT. BACK OF WIDOW'S HOUSE

Owen watches the dog fly overhead.

EXT. RIVER NEXT TO WIDOW'S

Blitz lands in the water with a large splash.

EXT. BETWEEN WIDOW'S AND SPIVEY'S

The Broom hops to the Shaw house pursued by his tormentors.

EXT. BACK OF WIDOW'S HOUSE

Owen leaps to his feet.

OWEN
Come here, boy! Come here.

The Broom hops behind the hen house. Owen runs to joins him.

BETWEEN WIDOW'S AND SPIVEY'S

Spivey directs his sons, pointing to the hen house.

EXT. HEN HOUSE

As Owen peeks from behind a corner he hears the Spivey boys coming from behind. He grabs the Broom and runs, hiding by a Volkswagon sized boulder at the water's edge.

EXT. RIVER BY ROCK

~~Blitz, at water level, dog-paddles toward Owen, crouched~~ behind the boulder, holding the Broom. The dog gets to the shore and starts barking. Owen climbs on top of the boulder to escape. Doug Jr. spies Owen.

DOUG, JR.
There he is! Over there!

Spivey and his crew approach Owen, who stands, clutching the Broom, atop the boulder.

SPIVEY
Throw it down, kid.
(to Wayne and Chuck)
Get up there and get it.

The wood-cutters climb the boulder. Owen takes a step back, as the Broom looks anxiously from the wood-cutters to the wind-churned river behind.

WAYNE
You little creep. Give me that thing.

The Broom begins vibrating, bouncing rapidly in its bristles. Owen clings to him, shaking. Wayne reaches out to grab Owen.

OWEN
Bb...bbb....bb..bbb..b..?

The Broom rises lifting Owen off the boulder, hovering. Chuck, on hands and knees, grabs the boy's ankle.

OWEN (cont'd)
Go! Go! Go!

The Broom, with Owen gripping him, lurches into clumsy low altitude flight. Owen sails backward, hits the river and bounces like a skipping stone, a foot above the water.

EXT. OTHER SIDE OF RIVER

Owen crashes into marsh grass and brush.

EXT. RIVER BY ROCK

Chuck and Wayne stare dumbfounded across the river.

EXT. OTHER SIDE OF RIVER

Owen picks his way through the woods and bramble, carrying the Broom. He pauses by the covered bridge and hesitantly steps up to the road. He is suddenly illuminated as Spivey, sitting in his SUV within the bridge, hits the headlights.

Owen starts running. Darryl jumps out of the truck, chasing him. Owen's feet pound the roadside, then become airborne as the Broom lifts him up. Spivey pulls up in the truck.

SPIVEY
(to the woodcutter)
Get in!

Owen gets his leg over the Broom, holding on tight, as the Broom accelerates away.

EXT. ROAD

The SUV roars up, closing the gap. The road curves.

EXT. FOREST

The Broom plunges straight ahead into the surrounding scrub forest. The SUV follows.

As Owen flies through the woods, he is painfully lashed by the branches and finally falls right off the Broom. He lands on the leafy ground with the SUV bearing down on him.

The Broom comes from behind Owen and slides his shaft beneath the boy and stands upright. Owen is now seated on the top of the Broom's bristles with his hands wrapped round the shaft. The Broom springs through the woods with Owen riding like a kangaroo jockey and Spivey's SUV crashes along behind him.

EXT. HAY FIELD

Owen exits the woods into a hay field. The Broom takes a few more leaps and springs into the air, flying once again.

EXT. A LARGE BARN

The large door on the eaves side of the barn is open. The Broom approaches, scraping the ground, the SUV just behind. Owen pulls up on the Broom's shaft and ascends unevenly in the gusting wind. He pulls up harder, sailing over the roof. The bristles clip the roof's ridge and he and the Broom slide down the shingles of the back side of the barn's roof.

EXT. BACK OF LARGE BARN

Spivey's truck blasts through the back of the barn. Owen and the Broom come sliding off the roof and bounce on the top of the SUV. With a burst of speed, the Broom pulls away.

EXT. DRIVEWAY

They shoot down a driveway. Owen makes the turn onto the road as Spivey, in hot pursuit, takes out a mailbox.

INT. ROADSIDE TAVERN

Jack, seated in his booth, speaks earnestly to Paula.

JACK
I'm telling you the truth. She flies around on a broom.

PAULA
(lifting Jack's drink)
How many has this guy had.

JACK
I'm serious, she does.

PAULA
Well, that's good. Maybe she can you a ride home.

JACK
What?

He follows Paula's gaze. Through the window, he sees Minna about to enter. He slumps down into the booth.

JACK (cont'd)
I'm not here.

PAULA
What?

JACK
Does she have her Broom?

PAULA
You jerk.

Minna walks into the tavern, still disheveled.

PAULA (cont'd)
You okay?

MINNA
Have you seenq Jack Wilkie?

Jack, makes hand signals to Paula: "No."

PAULA
(ignoring Jack)
Sure sweetie, he's right here.

Minna steps forward and looks into the booth. Jack, slumped over, tries to appear as if he's just relaxing.

JACK
Oh. Hi. How you doing?

Minna slides into the booth as he uneasily straightens up.

PAULA
(to Minna)
Can I get you anything? Some hot tea?

MINNA
Thanks.

Paula steps away.

MINNA (cont'd)
I know that must have been quite a shock seeing me...uh...

JACK
Hmmm...

MINNA
I didn't know he could do that.

JACK
He?

MINNA
He. It. I know I should've told you about it...I ...we...didn't think we should tell anyone. The children felt very strongly about it. They didn't want anyone to know.

JACK
I don't blame them.

MINNA
Really?

JACK
Well, sure. It'd be pretty tough, other kids knowing that.

Minna looks at him, puzzled.

MINNA
I guess. But someone has found out.

JACK
You mean besides me?

MINNA
Yes, Doug Spivey. He's taken it and I'm afraid something terrible will happen.

JACK
Taken what?

MINNA
The Broom. Spivey came into the house with those idiot wood cutters.

JACK
They took your Broom?

MINNA
Yes, Jack. I need your help.

JACK
Can't you just put a hex on him or something?

MINNA
A hex?

JACK
You know, some kind of curse.

MINNA
What are you talking about?

JACK
I don't know what you call it.
(wiggles his fingers)
The hocus pocus?...
(closes one eye)
The evil eye?...

MINNA
Wait a minute.

She stands and looks down at him.

MINNA (cont'd)
Well, I guess that makes sense. First I'm a real queen, now I'm a real...

Through the window, Minna sees Owen fly by on the Broom, pursued by Spivey in the SUV.

MINNA (cont'd)
Oh my God...

She runs out as Paula approaches with a pot of tea.

PAULA
She O.K?

JACK
Neighbor stole her broom.

PAULA
(peeved)
You got a weird sense of humor, Jack.

EXT. TAVERN

Minna's station wagon screeches out of the parking lot.

EXT. ROAD OUT OF WICKET LEADING TO COVERED BRIDGE

Owen is hunched over the Broom, flying a few feet above the road, the lights of Spivey's SUV just behind. Owen pulls up on the shaft. The Broom ascend briefly, then sinks back down. He tries again, with no response. The SUV is gaining. The bridge comes into view.

INT. SPIVEY SUV

Doug Spivey, grips the wheel and stares ahead demonically.

SPIVEY
Ha! That thing's running out of gas.

EXT. ROAD OUT OF WICKET - COVERED BRIDGE

The Broom stutters and slows. Spivey draws closer still.

OWEN
OK, we're going through.

Spivey's SUV is pushing against the bristles and the Broom is starting to bend beneath Owen.

OWEN (cont'd)
You can do it!

The Broom bends even further, then launches itself ahead. It appears as if Owen is about to meet Pingrel's fate, but the Broom drops down and swoops into the dark opening.

EXT. COVERED BRIDGE - FRONT OF WIDOW'S

Owen flies out of the bridge. He lands in the Widow's yard, rolling on the lawn. He picks up the Broom and runs inside.

Spivey's SUV exits the bridge. He pulls into his driveway and up to the garage. Minna's car comes through the bridge and she pulls into her driveway.

EXT. SPIVEY GARAGE - DRIVEWAY - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Spivey and crew exit the garage carrying the pipe, coils of rope, axes and a chain saw. Spivey's sons follow.

RUSSELL
Can we come, dad?

SPIVEY
I got a job for you boys. Run over there by the barn. Get some straw.

DOUG JR.
What are we going to do?

SPIVEY.
Gonna' have us a bonfire.

RUSSELL AND DOUG JR.
Cool.

EXT. WIDOW'S FRONT DOOR

Spivey climbs the steps with Wayne, Chuck and Daryl. The door opens. Lucy stands there, silently, with Grandma.

SPIVEY
(belligerently, loudly)
Where is your mother? I know that thing's in there. Do I have to...

Lucy raises her finger to her lips.

LUCY
Shhhh. Come in, come in.

INT. WIDOW'S HOUSE

Lucy and Grandma lead the men past Owen who lies on the sofa with Minna sitting beside him.

MINNA
He's going to be okay. Just get it out of here.

The wood-cutters and Spivey trade puzzled looks. They climb the stairs.

INT. WIDOW'S THIRD FLOOR LANDING

The door to the attic room is closed.

LUCY
(continues whispering)
He's asleep. In there.

GRANDMA
Tired out from flying.

LUCY
But we're afraid he'll wake up. Something happened to him. I don't know if it was flying or what... But he's... He's become...well, violent. He attacked my brother.

Spivey nods his head, knowingly.

SPIVEY
(to wood-cutters)
We'll get him while he's asleep.

They open the door slowly and tiptoe in to see the Broom lying on the bed. The wood-cutters cautiously approach it.

GRANDMA
Be careful, don't wake him.

The men handle the Broom gently and tie it to the post.

INT. TAVERN

Jack is pulling his jacket on. Walter is nearby mopping the floor. Paula is clearing Jack's table.

PAULA
Listen, if you don't want to say what the real problem is, that's okay, but...

JACK
I told you, she's ...

Paula holds up her hand.

PAULA
Enough of that wise guy stuff. Be a gentleman.

Jack buries his head in his hands.

PAULA (cont'd)
You've got to understand something, Jack. Whenever you get to know somebody, you discover little things about them that seem odd at first. Right, Walt?

WALTER
Unh? Yeah, that first time you catch them picking their teeth with a dinner fork, it's a real eye opener.

PAULA
Well, that's not exactly what...

JACK
Listen, I've got to go home.

EXT. PARKING LOT - JACK'S TRUCK

Jack climbs into his pick-up truck. Heavy winds are blowing. There is a knock at his window. It's Paula, holding his hat. He rolls down his window.

PAULA
Listen, Jack, if you really like somebody it doesn't matter if they pick their teeth with a pitchfork.

She tosses his hat into the truck.

PAULA (cont'd)
Sometimes you just gotta' take the leap.

Paula walks away. Jack looks at the hat in his lap, takes a deep breath and puts the cap on, pulling sharply on the bill.

EXT. WIDOW'S PORCH

The Widow's family is gathered, looking toward the Spivey's.

EXT. EDGE OF SPIVEY'S DRIVEWAY

Spivey, his sons, wife and the wood-cutters stand around the Broom, now staked in a pile of straw.

Spivey lights a cigar with a kitchen match, then tosses the match into the straw. The wind fans it into a blaze.

EXT. COVERED BRIDGE

Jack's truck speeds out of the covered bridge.

EXT. PORCH

Owen waves as Jack pulls into the Widow's driveway.

OWEN
Mom, Mom, it's Jack!

EXT. BETWEEN WIDOW'S AND SPIVEY'S DRIVEWAY

Jack leaps out and rushes to the fire. Spivey restrains him.

SPIVEY
This is none of your business.

JACK
Let go of me.

Minna is running off the porch followed by her family.

MINNA
Jack! No!

Jack pushes Spivey away and runs to untie the Broom, but the flames are too high. He is pulled away from the fire by Wayne and Chuck, his pant cuff on fire. The Wood-Cutters slap it out.

CHUCK
What are you, crazy, man?

DARYL
You know what that thing is?

JACK
(coughing)
It's...it's a Witch's Broom.

WAYNE
Well, let it burn, man. Let it burn.

Jack rises and limps back to his truck.

EXT. MINNA'S DRIVEWAY

The Shaws stand by Jack's truck, watching him approach, the wind whipped fire burning in the background.

JACK
Sorry.

Together they watch the Broom go up in flames.

MINNA
Are you OK? How's your leg?

Granny and Minna kneel to look at Jack's burned ankle.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Jack lays on the sofa, coughing. The Widow's family attends him. Granny dresses the burn with a salve.

MINNA
Granny's been making this for years.

GRANDMA
Best thing in the world for burns, cuts, scrapes. Put it on cow udders, too.

Jack winces as Granny applies the salve.

GRANDMA (cont'd)
I think he could use a little of my slumber-time tea, too.

MINNA
I'll get it.

Minna goes to the kitchen. Granny stands up.

GRANDMA
Make it strong.

Owen stands, looking sympathetically at Jack.

OWEN
I knew you'd come back to help us.

JACK
I got here late. I'm sorry.

OWEN
That's okay.

Grandma reaches out and pats Jack's arm.

GRANDMA
You tried, honey. That's what matters.

Minna returns with the tea.

GRANDMA (cont'd)
Okay, kids. Let's give Jack some peace and quiet. Bed time.

Grandma, Lucy and Owen go upstairs. Minna sits with Jack as he drinks some tea.

JACK
(sipping the tea)
That's different. What's in there?

MINNA
Another one of Granny's special concoctions.

Jack abruptly pulls the cup from his lips.

JACK
Wait, She's one too, isn't she?

MINNA
One what?

JACK
You know...

He sniffs the tea then he looks up at Minna.

JACK (cont'd)
Ah, who cares.

He gulps down the tea.

JACK (cont'd)
Not going to turn me into a frog?

MINNA
Jack, we found that Broom in the old oak tree.

JACK
(complacent)
Um. That's OK.

MINNA
What do you mean, "that's okay"? I'm telling you the truth.

JACK
Aw Minna, nobody'd keep a thing like that secret.

Minna takes the tea cup and turns to place it on a tray.

MINNA
Well, if you really think I'm a witch, why did you come...?

She turns to Jack. His eyes are closed.

MINNA (cont'd)
Jack?

He is sound asleep.

EXT. SHAW PROPERTY - LATER THAT NIGHT

The storm that has been building all night has arrived. Wind-driven rain falls. The house is dark and a dim light is visible through the hole in the barn door.

INT. BARN

Granny holds an ax, and Owen holds a gigantic old hair dryer and trains it on the Broom.

Now all white, the Broom bends around to catch the hot air all over it's shaft. An open bucket of white paint sits on the floor.

GRANDMA
Is it dry?

Owen touches the Broom and nods.

GRANDMA (cont'd)
(to Broom)
Now remember, give 'em a good scare, maybe knock a hole or two in a wall.

The Broom dips his tip into the paint bucket and dribbles out letters on the barn floor: "FIX IT. I WILL."

OWEN
"Fix it, I will."

Grandma nods approvingly and hands the ax to the Broom.

INT. SPIVEY BEDROOM

Spivey and Jean are asleep. A LOUD KNOCKING awakens them.

JEAN
Doug what is that?

INT. SPIVEY ENTRY HALL

Spivey descends the grand staircase. The KNOCKING continues. He opens the door and sees, illuminated in a flash of lightning, the Broom. It points the ax towards Spivey, like an accusatory finger. Spivey slams the door.

EXT. SPIVEY'S FRONT STEPS

The Broom starts to spin around.

INT. SPIVEY ENTRY HALL

Jean, at the top of the stairway, looks down at her husband.

JEAN
You look like you've seen a ghost.

SPIVEY
I have.

EXT. SPIVEY'S FRONT DOOR

The Broom spins. It turns into a blur, like a tornado.

INT. SPIVEY ENTRY HALL AND HOUSE

The Broom CRASHES THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR. Spivey leaps back as the room is showered in splintering wood.

The Broom passes through the house causing great destruction. It exits through the back wall, leaving A GAPING HOLE, large enough to drive a truck through.

Jean is hysterical. Doug Jr. and Russell join her on the staircase. Spivey looks out the hole. The Broom spins away, kicking up dirt and spraying debris. Rain pours in. The small white tornado turns to make another pass at the house.

The Spiveys run to their cellar as the Broom DESTROYS A CORNER OF THE KITCHEN.

EXT. SPIVEY MANSION

From a distance we see the walls of the MANSION collapse.

INT. DAY - WIDOW'S LIVING ROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

Jack awakes. He rises and goes to the window and beholds the ruins of the Spivey house. Only the chimneys remain, standing in the early morning sun.

EXT. SPIVEY HOUSE

Jack hastily approaches. He steps onto the mountain of debris and cups his hands to his mouth:

JACK
Hello! Hello! Anybody here?

Some boards jiggle and Jack hears the muffled voices of the Spivey family call for help:

INT. WIDOW'S UPSTAIRS HALLWAY WINDOW

Granny, Owen and Minna view the wreckage of the Spivey house.

MINNA
(alarmed)
Good lord.

GRANDMA
I guess he got kinda' carried away.

OWEN
We just wanted to scare 'em.

GRANDMA
Fix it. He did.

EXT. SPIVEY HOUSE

Jack stands over a hole in the debris, holding up a large plank with his back as the Spiveys emerge. Jack lets the board fall. The Spiveys look around nervously.

SPIVEY
Thank God you heard us. We've got to get out of here.

Spivey pushes his family ahead of him.

JACK
What happened?

SPIVEY
He might come back any minute.

JACK
Who?

Spivey stops and turns to Jack.

SPIVEY
The ghost. The ghost of the Broom.

EXT. WIDOW'S BACK DOOR STOOP

The Shaws, in their bathrobes, view the devastation.

EXT. SPIVEY DRIVEWAY

Spivey hastily removes the boards and bricks that cover his SUV. He barks orders to his family.

SPIVEY
Come on, get in! That thing could come back any minute.

He turns around to see the Shaw family lined up.

MINNA
Mr. Spivey, what happened?

SPIVEY
It's that Broom. It's after us!

MINNA
But we burned it.

Spivey climbs into his vehicle.

SPIVEY
It's the ghost, you fool, the ghost of the Broom. It'll come after you next.

The SUV roars out of the driveway. Jack and the Shaws walk toward the Widow's house. Owen and Lucy sprint ahead.

JACK
Is he right?

GRANDMA
We don't have anything to worry about.

Minna puts her arm around Jack.

MINNA
Trust us.

EXT. WIDOW'S DRIVEWAY - OAK SAPLING

Minna, Jack, and Granny join Lucy and Owen at the sapling.

OWEN
Isn't it amazing.

The tree is now about ten feet tall.

A V-formation of geese fly overhead, heading south for the winter. Lucy, Owen, Grandma, Minna and Jack look up to watch them. The geese fly out of view and we hold on the gray sky as it turns to blue. A TITLE appears on the screen:

THE FOLLOWING SUMMER

The camera pans down and shows the foliage of AN IMMENSE OAK TREE where the sapling stood. Beyond, all traces of the Spivey mansion are gone.

EXT. VEGETABLE STAND

A row of cars is at the stand, which is now twice the length it was before. Reverend Peters speaks to Granny, as shoppers fill their bags with produce. He gazes toward the open meadow that held the Spivey mansion.

REVEREND PETERS
...hard to understand. Good people like that. Tornado touches down, in October yet, takes just one house away.

GRANDMA
Well, Reverend, the Lord works in mysterious ways.

REVEREND PETERS
That he does, Addie. That he does. Say, have you've got any of Minna's delicious apple butter left?

GRANDMA
(bending down, under the stand)
You know, I think I did have one left from last fall. Saw it in here just the other...ah...here it is.

Granny rises holding the jar and hands it to the Reverend.

REVEREND PETERS
Wonderful. I've got the Spiveys new address. Moved out west. I know they'd love a jar of Minna's apple butter.

He holds the jar up admiringly. A close up reveals that, yes, a bit of mouse is inside. He directs his attention to the produce on the stand - truly magnificent - freakishly large specimens of tomatoes, cucumbers and lettuce.

REVEREND PETERS (cont'd)
Gracious. Minna's really working some magic back there in the garden.

EXT. VEGETABLE GARDEN

The garden is an overgrown jungle with rows of sky high corn and vegetable laden vines. Minna and the Broom are working together. The Broom, still wearing some white paint, lifts a giant zucchini into a wheelbarrow, spilling the contents.

MINNA
Oops.

She rights the wheelbarrow and begins to refill it.

MINNA (cont'd)
You've been out here all morning. Why don't you take a break. I'll get these.

The Broom hesitates.

MINNA (cont'd)
That's okay. Go on.

The Broom hops off. Minna continues loading the barrow.

JACK
Sweetheart, try this.

Jack comes round the garden row, wearing overalls and puffing on a pipe. He has a strawberry the size of a baseball and holds it out to Minna, who takes a bite.

Owen and Lucy come around the row of corn and approach Jack and Minna. They hold the kettle and ladle from the fireplace.

LUCY
We're almost out. Have you seen him?

The family hears the faint sound of the piano. They look toward the house and smile. We slowly move toward the house, now neat as a pin. The painted shutters are hung straight, the landscaping trimmed back. We pass through an open window to the living room. From behind, we see the Broom, playing a simple rag.

The door opens and Owen, Lucy, Minna and Jack enter. Owen sits by the Broom and plays a simple bass line. Jack and Minna dance, then open and extend their arms to Lucy, who joyfully enters their warm embrace.